



# FOUR ECCLESIASTICAL BIOGRAPHIES.

HILDEBRAND.  
BERNARD.

| INNOCENT III  
| WICLIF.

BY THE LATE

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THESE biographies were intended by the Author to form a fourth series of Historical Sketches, but at the time of his unexpected death they had not received their final revision.

They are printed as his hands left them, and this may serve as an excuse for the want of fuller headings and illustrative notes, which would, doubtless, have been added by the Author.

He always expressed the desire that these fruits of his reading during several happy vacation times should be looked upon as intended for boy and girl readers, rather than for students of maturer age.

F. G.

*January, 1864.*



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# FOUR ECCLESIASTICAL BIOGRAPHIES.

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## HILDEBRAND.

OF the early years of Hildebrand, afterwards Pope Gregory VII., little is known with certainty. He was the son of a carpenter, and born at Saona, a small town in Tuscany; but he had an uncle who was abbot of a monastery at Rome, and there he spent his youth, and grew up to manhood. Thus the city in which he was destined to rule with a sway more absolute than that of kings, was the scene of his early training; and the first indication of his future greatness was seen in a life governed by the strictest rules of temperance, and in his cheerful submission to all the requirements of conventual rule. But Rome was no place for one to whom the severest discipline was most welcome; the general corruption of manners had reached to her Religious Houses, and to those who bore rule within their walls, and Hildebrand sought a purer atmosphere and more congenial associates beyond the Alps. He found them in the famous Monastery

of Cluny, in Burgundy, and there devoted himself to study and to the exercises of devotion, with a zeal and assiduity which soon made him a marked man among a brotherhood of no common reputation for sanctity.

We do not learn what brought him back to Italy, but there we find him in the year 1046, at the age of thirty probably, or more (for the date of his birth is uncertain), siding with Gregory VI., one of three rival Popes, who was deposed by the active interference of the Emperor Henry III. The degraded Pontiff was carried in the monarch's train to Germany, and Hildebrand went with him; but, his patron dying shortly afterwards, he was again attracted to the peaceful shades of Cluny, and was advanced to the dignity of Prior. The deaths of two popes in rapid succession, both nominated and elected under imperial influence, left the papal chair vacant for a third time in two years; and before the end of 1048 Henry had convened a council of bishops at Worms, whose choice fell on Bruno, Bishop of Toul, afterwards Leo IX., a man of gentle nature and upright intentions, who did not covet the dignity, and accepted it, after some hesitation, when he found that envoys from Rome concurred with the Emperor and German bishops in desiring his elevation.

How much there was for an honest pope to do, may be inferred from the words of Leo's own biographer, in describing the state of things at the time of his accession:—"The world lay in wicked-

ness, holiness had disappeared, justice had perished, and truth was buried out of sight,—Simon Magus lording it over the Church, whose bishops and priests were given to luxury and fornication.” No wonder that the man who had to encounter, and, if possible, to correct evils like these, longed for a wise and firm counsellor at his side; and Hildebrand was entreated to go with him to Rome, and contribute his talents and energy to the great work of purifying the Church. But already the principles were rooted in the young prior’s mind, for which he contended so earnestly in after life. No papal election was valid in his eyes which did not proceed from the free choice of the Roman clergy and people, and Leo, practically, was the Emperor’s nominee. “Go to Rome as a private individual; there propose yourself to those who alone can designate the successor of St. Peter. Gain their suffrages without the interference of earthly potentates, and I will gladly cast in my lot with yours; otherwise, I abide where I am, and can never recognize your authority.” Such, in substance, was Hildebrand’s reply; and already his power of bending other men to his views was seen in Leo’s repudiation of his new-found dignity. As a pilgrim he travelled to Rome; bare-footed he passed its gates. To the assembled clergy and people he announced that the form of an election had been gone through in Germany, but all was null and void unless ratified by their approval. Let them say that they preferred another, and contentedly,

gladly even, he would return to a private station. The appeal was answered by an unanimous shout of approval, and Hildebrand, with the rank of cardinal, became the new pope's confidential adviser.

The next ten years were an important era in the life of Hildebrand. He became known in Italy and Germany as a man of commanding talents, of resolute will, the unflinching opponent of venality and corruption within the Church, and the champion of the Papacy, as a spiritual power, against turbulent Roman nobles, and the mightier power of the Emperor. In France, whither he went, as legate, to rebuke and punish disorders, which had reached a scandalous height, bishops were convicted of simony, and deposed; while others confessed their guilt beneath his searching eye, and the rumour went abroad that more than human sagacity was given to the judge. On the undefined boundary-lines of lay and clerical jurisdiction Pope and Emperor were rival powers, and Hildebrand controlled them both by turns.

Without seeking the highest place,—content, possibly, to await his time, or satisfied, it may be, with the ample occupation for his vigorous and active mind which he found in a subordinate position,—he was yet fixing on himself the eyes of the leading politicians and churchmen of Europe, and was acquiring experience and self-mastery, which made him more than a match for the wisest of them when the time of conflict came. Meanwhile Henry III. had died, in the prime of manhood, bequeathing

his kingly sceptre to a child, who became famous as the fourth Henry, while the titular dignity of Emperor of Germany was in abeyance.

During the period we speak of, three popes had reigned and died, and the summer of 1058 found the Church again without a head. Hildebrand was absent from Rome, and the faction, which had been kept in check by the Emperor, jealous for their native rights, and suspicious of priestly encroachments, seized the opportunity of electing a creature of their own, meeting for that purpose with arms in their hands, and dispensing with the usual formalities. A pope thus made was not likely to be recognized, either by the Empress-Regent, or by the numerous and influential body who regarded Hildebrand as their leader. Both parties agreed on a candidate, strong enough, in ability and weight of character, to maintain his authority against the malcontents; and at Sienna, where the seceding Roman clergy had mustered with their adherents, a hasty vote was taken for the Bishop of Florence, who was soon afterwards installed at Rome as Nicholas II.

Recent events had shown that the Papacy would never be really strong till the grand question was settled, *Who could make a Pope?* Twelve years only had elapsed since the Emperor, Henry III., was invited by the clergy and leading nobles of Rome to designate the man whom he thought the fittest for the office, and with his own hand placed Clement II. in the papal chair. Just now the old

claim of the Roman people had been revived, and who should decide between them and the churchmen if both parties did not happen to agree? The clergy themselves might be divided, and if part went through the form of an election in Rome itself, what would become of a decision like the recent one at Sienna? Disputes might be referred to the Emperor as umpire, but where, then, would be the Church's independence? and what pretence could the nominee of one European potentate have to rule over the rest of Christendom? These were knotty questions, and who should solve them? Pope Nicholas, with Hildebrand for his prompter, resolved to make the attempt, and to a marvel he succeeded. A settled constitution was wanting, and one was decreed, which gave the Emperor civil words, abrogated the rights of the laity, which dated from the day when the bishops of Rome began to claim Christendom for their own, and made a few churchmen in the once imperial city absolute lords over kings, and priests, and people, whenever one pope died and another had to be chosen. Henceforth the College of Cardinals was supreme. Officers, unheard of in the Christian Church through the first centuries, rose up to a height of dignity and power unknown to all the metropolitans of the East and West in their palmiest days. "We decree and appoint"—thus runs the memorable law (passed a thousand years after converts began to be gathered in Rome), by virtue of which a hundred popes have sat and ruled—"We decree and

appoint that on the death of the present Pontiff of the universal Roman Church, the cardinals shall, in the first place weighing the subject with the most serious consideration, proceed to a new election, regard being had to the honour and reverence due to our dearly-beloved son Henry, who is now styled King, and who, it is hoped, will hereafter, by the gift of God, become Emperor."

The time was well chosen. Henry III. would have been back in Italy with his armies before he yielded so much to a papal decree; Henry IV., in his manhood, would have spurned the offer of honour and reverence merely instead of substantial power; but he was under ten. His mother, Agnes, was a woman of gentle nature, little disposed to dispute with those whom she regarded with reverence as Fathers in the Church; and last, not least, an alliance between the Pope and certain Norman intruders into the south of Italy gave him for auxiliaries men with strong arms and good swords, who, having sworn themselves his vassals, were ready to do battle for cardinals either with the armies of Germany or with the disaffected nobles of Rome. And so the decree went forth, which, strange to say, amid all the world's mutations, has stood good for just eight centuries, and to which priests and laymen of the Church of Rome yield obedience as implicitly as if all that belongs to the making of a pope, and to his authority when made, were written down clearly in the Acts of the Apostles.

The law was passed, but the struggle was to



come, when Nicholas died, two years afterwards. Before the party of the cardinals proceeded to an election they sent to sound the Empress-Mother. Under the influence of those by whom she was surrounded, their emissary was refused an audience, and then they chose their own man, and called him Alexander II. Agnes convened a council of German prelates and nobles, who voted this election null, and proceeded to another. Then came war at the gates of Rome between the rivals. Hildebrand and his friends were compelled to accept the aid of Godfrey, Duke of Tuscany, and kept possession of the city; while the German pope held the Castle of St. Angelo. Next came a revolution beyond the Alps. A certain Archbishop of Cologne stole the boy-king from his mother, and went over to the party of the enemy, convening a council which admitted the validity of the Roman election. Still the pretender had numerous partisans, and held an impregnable fortress. For five years the conflict lasted, while Henry grew up to manhood, with unprincipled men for his guides, and was occupied with his own pleasures, or absorbed in German politics. Alexander, in the meantime, did all papal acts, and would listen to no compromise. Hildebrand was the presiding genius at Rome, and not only sustained and animated his chief, but kept together a body of zealous partisans, before whom opposition melted away by degrees. His triumph was complete when a council, assembled at Mantua by a German archbishop, and composed largely of the prelates of Northern Italy, who

had favoured the Empress's nominee, unanimously condemned the intruding pope, and pronounced Alexander the lawful successor of St. Peter. Another triumph followed shortly afterwards, when the Empress Agnes entered Rome, on a sorry steed, veiled, and clothed in sackcloth, and sought absolution from Alexander for all that she had done amiss while she held the reins of power; then, retiring to a Roman convent, she gave her remaining days to religious seclusion.

One thing must be admitted respecting Hildebrand by friends and enemies: he did not make haste to be pope. He preferred ruling those who reigned till his own time came, and meanwhile, under his skilful management, aided by many favouring circumstances in the monarchies of Europe, the power was growing which he was himself, at a later period, to wield with such terrible energy.

Through the long pontificate of Alexander there was no wavering policy at Rome, for the extremest claims of the papacy were re-asserted and unflinchingly maintained, till men grew familiar with the notion that it had some undefined rights over all bishops and metropolitans, and might be a convenient umpire in disputes between sovereign princes. In 1066 England was invaded and conquered by the Normans; there was friendship, as we have seen, between the Italian settlers of this warlike race and the Pope; William was politic enough to get the moral influence on his side which a papal benediction could give, so the banner of St.

Peter floated over the bloody field of Hastings. Abbeys and monasteries were founded by the ruthless invader, and filled with men, who swore fealty to Rome; while a bull was issued which degraded the less submissive bishops of Anglo-Saxon blood, and confirmed the Conqueror's nominees in all the higher offices of the Church. Lanfranc himself, a man to whom William used to speak with bated breath, when made Archbishop of Canterbury, crossed sea and land to beg the *pallium*, or cloak of office, at the hand of the Pope, Hildebrand having first refused, by letter, to dispense with his personal presence; and was careful afterwards to proclaim that the Pope, before whom he had reverently knelt, was Lord of Christendom, just as if the text about Peter and the Rock had contained a formal grant of apostolic powers to the bishops of Rome by name.

In the year 1073 Alexander II. followed the four other popes whom Hildebrand had known and guided, and the force of the new law respecting papal elections had to be tested again. Strange to say, it was invaded this time, not by Germans, but by Romans. The people got the start of the cardinals, for on the day after the Pope's death, while the funeral rites were performing in the Church of the Lateran, a cry arose that Hildebrand must be pope; universal acclamation took the place of a formal vote, the crowd bore their favourite in their arms to the chair of state; and, while he protested and struggled in vain, the cardinals removed all difficulty by unanimously ratifying the popular

choice. To his friends Hildebrand, now at last Gregory VII., wrote letters from his couch on the following day, in which he spoke of himself as one burdened beyond his strength, brought into deep waters, called unexpectedly to a task for which more than mortal strength and courage were wanted. To Henry, for the first and last time, he wrote submissively, like one who had been carried against his will to a dangerous elevation, and declared himself willing, even now, to descend from it, in compliance with the clause of reservation about "honour and reverence for the King of Germany," if the election did not find favour in his eyes.

Such were the public acts of Hildebrand at this crisis of his story. His admirers and eulogists read in them decisive proofs of his moral greatness. We remember that, up to this time, his life had been spent in asserting the papal sovereignty in the most absolute sense; we shall see in what temper, and for what objects, he wielded power when he rose from the step beneath the throne to the throne itself; and it seems beyond belief that he spoke and acted with sincerity, that the pontifical dignity was thrust upon him, and borne in patience simply because duty called him to it; or that he meant to retire to a private station if the young king declared against him.

The truth of his professions was not put to the test. Henry, not prescient of the future, hesitated, parleyed, and consented. To his ambassador at Rome Gregory repeated that all was hastily done,

without consent on his part, either asked or given, and that the consecration was purposely delayed till the will of the German Court was known. The King was but twenty-three, and was much embarrassed by feuds at home; fair words were accepted in explanation of a step which seemed to derogate from his ancestral rights, a favourable answer was returned, and the contest was deferred which, when it came, shook Europe from end to end.

So, at the ripe age of nearly sixty, the reign of Gregory began, and his energies were presently directed to the extirpation of evils, or fancied evils, which, in his judgment, had been tolerated too long. Simony had tainted all ranks of the clergy, and measures of repression had been tried by the more virtuous popes in vain. Dean Milman may be trusted as a calm and dispassionate witness on such a subject, and he thus describes the wide-spread corruption which had turned the Church into a market :—"At this period not merely the indignant satire of the more austere, but grave history and historical poetry, even the acts and decrees of councils, declare that, from the papacy down to the lowest parochial cure, every spiritual dignity and function was venal. The highest bishops confessed their own guilt, the bishopric of Rome had too often been notoriously bought and sold. Sometimes, indeed, but not often, it condescended to some show of decency."

Gregory had been a stern reprover of ecclesiastical corruptions before. Grave expostulations had

gone forth, and menaces had been carried far and wide ever since his influence was felt at Rome. But what had been spoken vaguely and gently hitherto was now repeated with intelligible distinctness, and in tones of impassioned earnestness.

Gregory knew that the conflict must be fierce and sharp, but he had counted the cost, and would listen to no compromise. Powerful offenders could neither doubt his sincerity nor mistake his meaning. Bishops who had bought their mitres found their titles suddenly called in question, and princes, to whom the purchase-money had been like a part of their customary tribute, were startled at having their nominations annulled by a pope, hardly seated in his chair, who wrote his mandates in imperial style, and signified plainly that his will was to be law for Europe in all matters relating to the Church's rights.

In his zeal for reformation Gregory was perfectly honest; he was no respecter of persons, and could be neither bribed nor daunted. One thing only he forgot—that while men were men, and the Church was gorged with wealth, the temptations to simoniacal practices must be too strong for their virtue. So he warred, sword in hand, with the hydra-headed monster, and the donors of new lands and revenues all the while were nourishing its vitality and strength.

The counteracting forces are well described by Dean Milman :—"It was a wild paradox," he says, "to attempt to reconcile enormous temporal possessions with the extinction

Another class, however, were swarming in the Church, whom Gregory deemed little better than traffickers in benefices. A monk in heart and feeling, he had a fixed, immovable persuasion that a married priesthood must no longer be tolerated. That a Church, whose rulers rest their title to obedience on a presumed descent from the married apostle, should ever have bound the yoke of celibacy on all who minister at her altars, is one of the many anomalies which her votaries have to explain. Certain it is that by slow degrees the fetters were forged and riveted on willing or resisting victims.

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of all temporal motives for obtaining these all-envied treasures. Religion might, at first, beguile itself into rapacity, on account of the sacred and beneficent uses to which it designed to devote wealth and power. Works of piety and charity might, for a short time, with the sacred few, be the sole contemplated object. But rapacity would soon throw off the mask, and assume its real character; personal passions and desires would intrude into the holiest sanctuary; pious works would become subordinate, till at last they would vanish from the view; ambition, avarice, pride, prodigality, luxury, would, by degrees, supplant those rare and singular virtues. The clergy had too much power over public opinion themselves to submit to its control; they awed mankind, were under awe to none. In the feudal system, which had been so long growing up throughout Western Europe, bishops had become, in every respect, the equals of the secular nobles. In every city the bishop, if not the very first of men, was on a level with the first. There was a constant and growing temptation—a temptation which overleaped or trampled down every barrier, to enter the Church from unhallowed motives.” —*History of Latin Christianity*, III., pp. 105, 106.

As the current of feeling in favour of monasticism ebbed and flowed, prohibitory laws were enforced or relaxed. Custom, in many quarters, set the stricter rule at defiance. The married clergy had stood up manfully for their rights in cities so near to Rome as Milan and Florence, while German bishops had not only asserted their Christian liberty, but boldly contrasted the purity of men who lived in lawful wedlock, with the notorious vices which prevailed among the other class.

Against private immoralities, as against the public disorders which grew out of the undisguised traffic in ecclesiastical offices, Gregory warred with unsparing severity. Unhappily, in his theory of morals, as applied to the priesthood, wives and concubines held the same place: therefore, when he resolved to purge the temple, the reformation on which his heart was set included the banishment of wives and mothers by the thousand and ten thousand, from homes which their virtues had adorned and blessed. Before the end of the first year of his pontificate he assembled a council at the Lateran, from which the decree went forth that married priests must officiate no longer wherever the authority of the Roman See was recognized. The law was retrospective. It made no distinctions, and showed no mercy. To be the faithful husband of one chaste wife was henceforward a crime in every man who was an ordained priest; and instant separation, at whatever cost of private grief and social disorder, was peremptorily



commanded. "The sacraments are sacraments no longer, if touched with polluted hands," ran the sweeping sentence in effect, if not in words; "let laymen know that they must seek unmarried priests if they desire the grace and blessing which God vouchsafes to sinful men through the medium of His Church."

Words like these had gone forth in other days, but they were timidly spoken or soon forgotten. No pope had yet had the hardihood to venture on a conflict with all the married priests in Christendom, and with the natural feelings of indignation and pity which such a ruthless policy must excite in all honest minds. Now a bolder spirit ruled at Rome, —one who feared no living man, and whose heart was steeled against all appeals from human instincts and affections, when they came into collision with what seemed to his perverted conscience a sacred duty. He went straight forward. The remonstrances of men—the tears of women—the beggary of children—protests from countries in which public opinion largely favoured the condemned practice—petitions for indulgence as to the past from numbers whose lives were blameless, and whose devotion to their calling was sincere and fervent—all these were nothing in his eyes. He had a work to do, (for God, as he thought,) and woe be to him if he turned back before his task was done, or let worldly feelings make the sacrifice less costly which was demanded by the Church's safety.

Terrible was the conflict which ensued, and

angry, even to fierceness, were the passions which were kindled in the strife. On the one hand, the unrelenting Pope was regarded in many quarters with a hatred which made the blackest accusations current and popular. Charges utterly devoid of truth and likelihood were readily believed of one who seemed a sort of monster, at war with human instincts and domestic charities. Cruel, venal, licentious, winning the powerful to his purposes by the arts of magic,—these, and others like them, are the terms of reproach heaped upon him by writers of his own creed; and tenfold worse than he is thought to be now-a-days by the blindest zealot on the Protestant side, he was reputed by multitudes in that age, who doubted nothing of all that was claimed for the Roman See. On the other hand, the partisans of Gregory fought for their chief with a zeal worthy of a better cause. Married priests were assailed with reproaches due only to persons guilty of disgraceful crimes. Their unhappy partners were pursued with unmanly violence, and classed unscrupulously with the vile of their own sex. One of Gregory's biographers tells us that "the concubines of these Nicolaitans, or wives, as they were called, were the objects of divine vengeance: some burnt themselves; others, who went to bed well, were found dead in the morning, without any traces of disease; some were put to death by evil spirits, and the bodies were carried by them to their dens, and there left unburied."

Amid contentions like these Gregory fought out

the battle, and won it. Bishops and legates seconded their chief, and gave sentence on the refractory throughout Christendom. By degrees the new order of things was accepted, and a popular feeling grew up in favour of the law which made the priesthood of Rome yet more a sacred caste, gifted with mysterious virtue, and trafficking with Heaven on behalf of the sinful crowd. Never was the triumph of one unconquerable will more complete; and eight centuries of obedience have given this ordinance of the eleventh century a fixedness and sacredness in the eyes of the clergy and laity, almost like the first principles of morality.

Larger and loftier claims, however, were soon to be put forward than those which we have named already. Other popes had talked grandly and vaguely about some allegiance due from Christian princes to the successors of St. Peter. But it remained for the last of them to turn doubtful phrases into a plain-spoken assumption of sovereignty. Literally he began to talk like the Lord of Christendom. Kings were to be his feudatories; there was to be henceforth but one supreme power on earth, and *that* limited in its jurisdiction only by its own conscience, and its own interpretation of the Divine Law. On points like these, when assertions are made which sound startling to modern ears, it is well to quote the very words of public documents; and we give, therefore, Gregory's own words, contained in the seventh of his *three hundred and fifty* extant letters, which was addressed to the grandees

of Spain before he had been Pope for a month :—  
“ Ye are not, as we believe, ignorant that the kingdom of Spain was, of old time, the property of St. Peter; or that, notwithstanding its long occupation by Pagans, the law of justice remaining unchanged, it still belongs, of right, to no mortal but to the Apostolic See. For that which has once, by God’s providence, become the property of Churches, cannot, while it endures, without their formal surrender of it, be rightfully alienated from them, however the lapse of time may interfere with their enjoyment of it.” What St. Peter had to do with Spain it may puzzle men learned both in theology and history to conjecture. In fact, the claim had more than Gregory’s common audacity about it, for not only was Spain shared between Saracens and Christians, but the Roman service had never been introduced into its Churches. Many years subsequently to this high-sounding assertion of prerogative, after the Pope was in his grave who said boldly, “ Spain is mine, because it was once St. Peter’s,” the bishops gave way, and consented to adopt the Breviary, which had gradually stolen over Europe.

Another letter of an early date is worth quoting, in which the same kind of language was held respecting France. The clergy of that country were less submissive than those of Italy and Germany. The decree respecting married priests had been received in many places with a burst of indignation, and King Philip disposed of bishoprics

and abbeys with little regard to papal authority or Roman canons ; promoting his favourites at pleasure, and setting the recent decrees against simony at defiance. In the year 1074, therefore, a letter of rebuke was addressed by Gregory to the bishops, recounting how the kingdom of France had declined from its ancient glory, how wickedness filled the land like a pestilential disease, how the monarch had merited the wrath of Heaven for adding rapine to adulteries and the despoiling of the Church ; and how the men, who should watch like shepherds, were but hirelings and dumb dogs, when they saw the wolf devour the flock before their eyes. “ We implore you, therefore—by our apostolical authority we exhort you—assembling yourselves together, to consult for your country, for your good name, and for your salvation. Addressing your king with one consent, warn him of the dangers which surround himself and his kingdom. . . . If he shall refuse to hear you, announce to him, as from our mouth, that he can no longer escape the sword of apostolical censure. Do ye, at the same time, copy the example of your mother, the Holy Roman Church : renounce his service and fellowship, and forbid the public performance of religious worship throughout the realms of France. If this punishment shall fail to move him, let all men know, and be assured that, by God’s blessing, we will do our utmost to deprive him of his kingdom. For yourselves, if we find you lukewarm in this matter, which necessity has forced upon us, we shall be

persuaded that he is incorrigible because he thinks he has you on his side; then, in our judgment, you will be the partners and abettors of his guilt, and when we have degraded you from your episcopal offices we will smite you with a bolt of vengeance no less heavy."

Such was the style of this wonderful man when his pontifical honours were yet new, but the great conflict between the temporal and spiritual powers was to be decided on other ground; and the time could not be far distant when the claims of Gregory, pushed to extravagance like this, would bring him into direct antagonism with the ruler of Germany. For a time Henry was engrossed with disputes of another kind, and had to subdue his rebellious subjects before he was free to chastise this insolent priest. Saxony was in revolt, and the monarch's haughty demeanour, wayward temper, and gross misgovernment, gave such strength to a confederacy of disaffected princes and barons that for a time his throne was endangered. Gregory watched the progress of the conflict, and was prepared for either result. He sent legates and edicts to Germany for the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs, without condescending to consult with Henry. He suspended an archbishop who ventured on a remonstrance. He took on himself to pronounce a sentence of banishment from the German Court on five nobles whom his predecessor had excommunicated. Lastly, came the yet bolder step of offering battle to the

sovereigns of Europe on the debatable ground of lay investiture.

The history of this subject would require a long chapter by itself. Suffice it to say, that in every country where the Church was endowed with ample revenues, it was the practice for new bishops to do homage for the temporalities belonging to their see, and to receive a ring and a crozier at the hand of the prince. To the metropolitans, say some, this right had once belonged, and temporal sovereigns had usurped their place by degrees. Others contend that the custom began with the holders of benefices and ecclesiastical dignities, which were royally endowed; and that, by continual encroachments, the stronger party had interposed a *вето* in relation to lands and revenues which the Church owed to the bounty of private individuals. Any how, the custom was rooted in every European country when Gregory began to rule, and largely, no doubt, had it been abused. In bad times, simoniacal appointments had been the rule, and promotions, which gave worth its due, the exception. The richest sees were bought with gold, or filled with favourites of the court, while learning and piety were unhonoured and neglected. Gregory would have done a righteous deed if he had remonstrated against these scandals, or negotiated with Christian princes respecting their abatement or removal. But it was not his wont to parley with any mortal man. What was doubtful, when he thought the time for action was come, he decided by his own authority. Claims

advanced by former popes, though never conceded, were assumed to be a portion of the inalienable rights of the Church; and, in other cases, where precedents were wanting, bold assertions, solemnly repeated, on every fresh occasion, supplied their place. So in the Lent of 1075, a month after he had written to his friend, the Abbot of Cluny, that he was "wearied with to l, hemmed in by trouble, living, as it were, in death, buffeted by a thousand storms," he rose up to the encounter with the princes of this world, and proposed the decree, which found ready acceptance with a council of churchmen. that henceforth no man should be reckoned among bishops or abbots who accepted his appointment from any lay person,—that the lesser dignities of the Church should be subject to the same rule,—and that if emperor or duke, count or marquis, should presume to grant investiture of any ecclesiastical dignity, he should be visited with the severest censure and punishment.

Soon after this law was enacted, and laid up for use in the papal armoury, Henry's domestic troubles were over. Saxony was at his feet, and the rebel leaders were treacherously seized and imprisoned after a promise of impunity had been given. His next encounter was fiercer and deadlier. His adversary was an old man, wasted with labours and penances; but the issue was disaster and defeat. In spite of the decree about investiture, Henry nominated a canon to the vacant bishopric of Liege, who was more at home in the battle-field than in



the pulpit. He admitted the five excommunicated nobles to familiar companionship with himself. In Italy as in Germany he carried things with a high hand, and sent a creature of his own to occupy the archiepiscopal see of Milan. Without any appeal to Rome, he deposed the prelates who had sided with the rebel party in Saxony, and was sanguine enough to hope that the Pope would deal with them as convicted traitors, and confirm the sentence. But their friends got the start of their accusers, crossed the Alps, and claimed the protection of Gregory. Not content with pleading their own cause, they charged Henry with the foulest crimes. He led a life of profligate self-indulgence ; justice was bought and sold, that his coffers might be filled and his favourites enriched ; his counsellors were the companions of his pleasures, men who neither feared God nor regarded man ; by their voice he was guided, not merely in affairs of state, but in the disposal of benefices, and the choice of bishops. The country groaned, they said, under misrule which was a disgrace to Christendom ; the patience of loyal subjects was exhausted ; and to whom could they make appeal but to him, who by divine designation and appointment, was higher than the kings of the earth ? So, in very deed, Gregory deemed himself, and the great offender was summoned into court. Not content with ordering the liberation of the Saxon bishops, and promising to decide their case at some future Council, Gregory assumed the place of umpire between the King and

the remonstrants, and named the day when Henry was to appear at Rome, and give answer to these weighty charges. In default of his coming, or in the event of his not making his case good against unscrupulous accusers, he was to be sentenced as a criminal at the discretion of the Pope.

From this point great events succeed each other with startling rapidity, like the shifting scenes of some spirit-stirring drama, in which the strongest passions are developed, and results of mighty consequence are seen to hang upon the issue. In December, 1075, this summons went forth from Rome. On Christmas Eve of the same year, the Pope, according to annual custom, went in procession to the Church of *Sancta Maria Maggiore*, and was engaged in the most solemn act of worship, when the service was rudely interrupted by a band of armed ruffians. It chanced that a storm of unusual violence had driven stragglers to their homes, and the midnight congregation consisted of a handful of worshippers. A brief struggle ensued; but the Pope's defenders were too few for effectual resistance, and, after receiving a wound in the forehead, he was stripped of his pontifical garments, and hurried away on horseback to a fortified mansion within the walls. The assailant was *Cenci*, one of a band of desperadoes who were the terror and scandal of Rome; and the place of retreat was one of the strongholds in which they sometimes defied both pope and prefect. This man had justly been called to account for some previous outrages, and

had vowed revenge; but rumour pointed to one much higher, a distinguished prelate, as the contriver of the plot. Surprised and helpless, a prisoner in the hands of men who had violated all the sanctities of time and place, Gregory was perfectly calm and self-possessed, betraying no sign of fear or passion. The clouds poured down torrents of rain, and the streets were almost deserted. Slowly, therefore, had the rumour of this strange occurrence spread through the city; but before morning dawned the magistrates were astir, the gates of the city were closely watched, the populace were roused to fury by the tidings of a missing pope; and when some got upon the track, a crowd was speedily gathered, who threatened to batter down the walls of his prison unless he were restored to liberty. The insurgents had miscalculated their strength, and were foiled in their purpose; while Cencius, alarmed for his safety, threw himself at the feet of his captive, and sued for pardon. The occurrence was one which brought out all that was noblest in Gregory's character, and made him look far greater than when he sat in state, and used swelling words of almost superhuman arrogance. "For myself," he said, "I forgive thee freely; but thou hast sinned against God and His Church. Travel to Jerusalem, for thy penance; and if God shall spare thee, return as a penitent, to give an example of godly quietness to thy fellow citizens." When the danger was over, Gregory was borne back in triumph to the church; the interrupted mass was

resumed, and the usual benediction given amid tears and blessings. Then, with perfect calmness and self-possession, he led the way to the Lateran Palace, and presided at the banquet which was always spread at that holy season.

The scene next shifts to Germany. A month exactly after this outrage a council was gathered at Worms, over which Henry presided. The primate was there—Siegfried, Archbishop of Mentz, already known as one who ill brooked the domination of Rome—with bishops and abbots a goodly array, including prelates from great and populous cities like those of Treves, and Utrecht, and Spire, and Strasburg. Already Henry's citation to Rome was known. How *that* should be dealt with was no question with the King or his counsellors. Their deliberations took quite another character. How should *the Pope* be dealt with, who had added this last insult to severities which shocked every generous mind, and provocations which had been too tamely borne? With all his faults Henry was the representative of the great monarchy of the West. The traditions of papal nominations by Otho and Henry III. were fresh in German memories. The time for action had come at last, and as Gregory had provoked the contest, upon his own head be the consequences. To arguments like these others were added by intemperate accusers, which weakened their cause, and gave a great advantage to the enemy. A cardinal presbyter was there, belonging to the Roman faction, which was always

opposed to Gregory—a faction made up of priests to whom strict discipline was odious, and of nobles whose licence was restrained by a government at once just and firm. This man poured forth a torrent of invective, which pretended to be a truth-telling narrative, wherein Gregory's life and conversation were painted in the blackest colours. He was a dealer in the magical arts, a worshipper of the Devil, a profaner of the Holy Eucharist, a base-born adventurer, who had bribed the populace, and thus risen to the chair of St. Peter. It was pretended that these charges were sent from Rome, and authenticated by the senate and cardinals; but the letters were forgeries, and would have obtained no credit with judges who were not blinded by passion and resentment. Baser feelings were at work, along with an honest conviction, on the part of some, that a stand must be made somewhere for the Church's liberties; and, under the combined influence of many conflicting motives, the extreme measure was adopted of pronouncing Gregory deposed, and abjuring all subjection to him as the spiritual head of Christendom. "Never more will I account or style Hildebrand Pope," was the declaration subscribed, first by Henry himself, and then by archbishops, bishops, and abbots in succession.

We advance another month, and at Rome again we find another assembly, convened in the Lateran, with Gregory at its head. It was the very meeting, in the second week of Lent, to which Henry had been summoned; but instead of the king a bold

priest presented himself, who had undertaken to report the decree of Worms, and delivered his message with startling plainness and effrontery. "Descend from the throne of St. Peter without delay," was his blunt address to the Pope himself, "and abandon the usurped government of the Roman Church ; so the King commands, and the bishops of Germany and Italy." Then, turning to the cardinals and clergy, who listened in amazement to words so new and strange, he summoned them to attend the King, his master, at the feast of Pentecost, to receive at his hands a *true Pope* ; "for *this one*," he said, pointing to Gregory, "is a ravening wolf."

In such a scene Gregory was sure to be master of himself, and to behave with firmness and dignity. The messenger put into his hand a letter from Henry, full of coarse and insulting expressions, and he read it out line by line. When the indignant feelings of the assembly broke out into threats, he calmed their violence, and spoke at length of the "perilous times" which the Apostle had predicted ; of the offences which must needs come to try the faithful ; of the Lord's command to be "wise as serpents," yet "harmless as doves ;" of his sure hope and trust that neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution should ever separate them from the love of Christ. Then, that all might be the more solemnly done, he adjourned the sitting, and on the morrow gave forth the sentence which declared Henry no longer King in Germany or Italy, ab-

solved all Christian men from their oath of allegiance, and laid on him the Church's anathema, as one accursed of God, and cut off from the communion of the faithful. One circumstance gave yet more thrilling interest to the scene. Near the Pope there sat the Empress-Mother Agnes, long since delivered from the cares of state, but watching with the liveliest anxiety all that concerned the honour and fortune of her son. Gregory turned to her before the terrible words were spoken, and double emphasis was given to them when no sign of dissent was given by one into whose heart they must have pierced like a sword. Of course the German and Italian bishops who had sided with Henry were sentenced and degraded, the Primate Siegfried being forbidden to approach the Holy Communion, except in the article of death, on confession of his errors ; and the list of anathematized persons was swelled by the addition of nobles and prelates, in many lands, for offences of various degrees.

The ground, therefore, was cleared for a combat such as Europe had never seen before. Each party was strong in his own weapons and his own resources ; and the wisest could not foresee or conjecture how the quarrel would end. Recent circumstances had embittered the strife, and made it a war of passions as well as principles. Unscrupulous champions of the papacy affirmed, perhaps believed, that Henry and Cencius were partners in crime, and that the daring attempt of Christmas Eve was made

at the King's instigation, or with his connivance. The charge was entirely groundless ; yet was it widely propagated, and added fierceness and rancour to the indignant feeling with which his contumacy was regarded in Italy. On the other hand, in Germany, the blackest imputations against Gregory, which had been listened to at Worms, were not wholly discredited ; for distance, in those days, and scanty intercourse between countries which were dis severed by mountain ranges, made the discovery of truth a slow and painful process. Each party, therefore, was aggrieved, and felt the wrong deeply ; while the false rumours, on either side, made eager partisans believe that they were warring, not with an erring mortal, but with some monster of depravity.

The question was now to be decided whether German nobles and prelates would stand by their sovereign, and brave the terrors of a papal malediction ; also whether Henry himself would retreat from the position he had taken up, or would advance another step, and lead his armies to Rome, there to set up a less imperious and more accommodating pope. Whatever dreams of this kind he may have had, they were speedily dissipated by defections among his friends, and the growing power of the enemy. Quite apart from his quarrel with the Pope, his government was odious to a large portion of his subjects. His own character stood out in marked contrast with the temperate habits, and blameless purity of life, which Gregory had carried



with him from Cluny to the Vatican ; while to men who regarded the moral aspect of the question at issue, the argument was one of mighty consequence, that the patrons and practisers of simony throughout the empire,—with nobles who openly defied the laws, and prelates notorious for laxity of discipline, and the clergy least in repute for sanctity, —were all on the side of Henry, all for another pope.

Many causes combined, therefore, to weaken the anti-papal confederacy, while Gregory's firm bearing, unwavering policy, and reiterated assertions of his jurisdiction over princes, in the last resort, gained fresh adherents among the timid and wavering. His industry kept pace with his zeal. While he had an eye for the Church's interests in every European country, Germany was watched more closely than the rest. Men who fled to Rome, and humbly sought forgiveness for all that had been done amiss at Worms or elsewhere, were easily forgiven. The contumacious received fresh warnings, or were visited with yet heavier penalties. Another class, perplexed and bewildered between competing claims, shrank from the supposition that the Pope had unlawfully stirred up rebellion against their sovereign, yet felt, like honest men, that allegiance to civil rulers was a plain Christian duty, from which an assembly of churchmen in a distant country could not set them free. *These* were gravely reasoned with, and counselled not to peril their salvation by taking part with blasphemers whom the Church disowned.

The Bishop of Metz was among the doubters; and thus confidently Gregory set himself to resolve his scruples. After quoting the authority of St. Peter, not from his Epistles or the Acts of the Apostles, but from a spurious letter of Clement "To James, the Lord's brother,"—after referring to Pope Zachary, and his ambiguous answer to King Pepin,—after misquoting his great namesake and predecessor, and recounting the well-known but strangely inapplicable incident of Theodosius and Ambrose at the Church of Milan, he thus proceeds: "Do these disputers believe that, when the Lord thrice entrusted His Church to St. Peter, saying, *Feed My sheep*. He excepted kings? If the Apostolic See, by virtue of authority derived from Heaven, may judge spiritual things, shall not men of earthly dignity give account before it of their deeds? Do they suppose that the regal dignity is above that of bishops? Let them look to the origin of the two, to see how widely they differ from each other. Human pride grasped at the one: the other is the gift of Divine compassion. To compare the dignity of a bishop to the dignity of a king, as St. Ambrose hath said in his pastoral epistle, is to compare things which are as much apart in value as gold excels lead."

Bishops, however, were not the only correspondents of Gregory at this crisis. Among other consequences of the sentence of deposition, Saxony was in revolt again. The men who were entrusted by Henry with the custody of the disaffected leaders

held that his orders were no longer binding ; and presently the brave Otho, the darling of his countrymen, and some of his influential friends, were at the head of an insurgent army. A common enmity led to common counsels, and the generals, being very orthodox on the subject of the Pope's authority, asked his advice about proceeding to choose a new king. "Be not hasty," was his answer ; "Henry, indeed, is dethroned, and his subjects owe him no obedience ; but nought have we done through pride or in a spirit of worldly ambition. If he returns sincerely to God, we beg of you, as of brothers, that you will deal gently with him, not renouncing your allegiance, as in justice you might do, but granting a compassionate forgiveness to his crimes. If he continues obstinate, then choose you out a prince who will enter into a secret engagement with you to do our bidding, besides taking such measures as the Christian religion and the safety of the empire shall require ; then advise us of his name and rank and character, that we may confirm your choice by our apostolical authority."

Gregory, therefore, was gathering strength ; his rival, on the other hand, found the resources on which he relied when he provoked the contest failing him almost daily. Henry summoned a Diet at Worms ; but lo ! the men, who were the pillars of his throne, came not at his call. This was at Whitsuntide, 1076. In October of the same year a Diet of another kind was held at Tribur, not summoned by the monarch, but by princes who hated

his yoke, and met to consider how to restore peace to Germany. That was thronged with men of earnest purpose and of commanding influence. The pope's legates had a conspicuous place in the assembly; the subject of debate, however, was not the papal controversy, but Henry's political crimes, his violated pledges, his acts of plunder and oppression, his denial of justice to the weak, his insolent contempt of the old nobility who, under former monarchs, had been the strength and glory of the empire. Things were almost ripe for a vote of condemnation; but in such high matters, looking at the past relations between popes and emperors, the leaders hesitated to take the final step except with the sanction of Gregory; and, as a matter of policy, they longed, of course, to have on their side all the moral weight which could be contributed by men who held religiously to the Head of the Church as the great centre of authority, and were shocked by what they deemed the impiety of Henry. So to a future day, and to another council, the decision was transferred—the legates being deputed to carry to Rome an earnest request that the Pope would come to Augsburg in the following February, that, then and there, the great question might be settled, whether the offences of Henry were to be pardoned, or Germany was to have another king. The monarch, meanwhile, had laid aside his pride. He was near at hand, and learnt all that was said and done at Tribur. He consented to parley with his subjects,—consented to let the powers of sovereignty

remain in abeyance for a time,—consented to submit the matters in dispute to the arbitration of the Pope, and promised to answer his accusers before Gregory at Augsburg.

The German quarrel would have sufficed to absorb the energies of an ordinary man, but the theory of Gregory made the whole flock of Christ his charge ; his keen gaze penetrated to every corner of Europe ; his capacious and restless mind embraced all strifes and enterprizes which could exalt or endanger the power of the Church. So we find the letters of this busy period largely occupied with names less familiar and events less momentous than those which have figured in our narrative. There was civil war in Hungary, and messages of encouragement or rebuke were sent to the rival competitors for the crown. The King of Aragon is advised about his bishops, and his nominees are objected to because they are sons of married priests—tainted men, therefore, in the Pope's eyes, and not fit for high places in the Church. The King of Denmark receives fatherly exhortations as to the government of his kingdom, and is invited to send one of his sons to Rome, and competent men besides, as ambassadors, who may treat of matters which shall turn to God's honour and the welfare of His people. The Count of Sicily, who had fallen into disgrace, is pardoned and absolved, always on condition that he lives as a good son of the Church, and holds no intercourse with the famous Robert Guiscard, the Norman Duke of Apulia, his excom-

municated brother. The Count of Flanders has a missive charging him to repel from the Churches "incontinent and simoniacal clergymen," and to see that none ministered in his kingdom but priests of undoubted loyalty to the Roman see. Lastly, Dalmatia had a duke, and the duke had troublesome neighbours and disaffected subjects; so, like greater potentates, he begged for promotion at Rome, offering for a bribe, in the strange language of the day, to become a vassal of St. Peter; and straightway legates came from Rome to crown him, and thus the duke became a king.

The winter of 1076 was wearing on, and the following February was to bring matters to a crisis. The second day of that month was appointed for the meeting between the Pope and the German princes; the 23rd was the anniversary of the day when the sentence of excommunication had fallen on Henry, and it had been resolved at Tribur that before the expiration of the year he must submit himself, and be reconciled to the Church, or else the last tie would be broken that bound his vassals to allegiance. Henry wished to have the meeting with his foremost enemy in Italy, for Gregory, stern though he might be, and unforgiving, and fenced round with the majesty of the popedom, was to him less terrible than a court in which his own subjects were to be accusers and judges. But his prayer to that effect was met by a refusal, and a fresh summons to Augsburg. Thither the Pope was journeying, and

had got as far as Lombardy when the news reached him that Henry was at Turin. In fact, his impetuous nature had led to a resolve which took friends and enemies by surprise, and proved how much his fears were roused by all that had recently passed in Germany. The passes of the Alps were watched by his enemies, and like a fugitive the monarch had to pass from one portion of his dominions to the other, attended by a small retinue; while a winter of unusual severity rendered the journey one of severe privation and fearful danger. The courage and energy of the man, who had to fight so hard a battle, and whose history comprises such strange reverses, seemed to rise with disaster and defeat; and over fields of untrodden snow, or along paths hewn out of the solid ice by his peasant guides, he pressed forwards, with his wife and infant son, up the steep of Mount Cenis, and down the yet more perilous descent, resolved that nothing but sheer impossibility should prevent him reaching the southern side of the great mountain chain before the time of his probation had passed away. In Northern Italy Henry was received with a shout of welcome. There the anti-papal party were strong in numbers and influence, and at Milan, especially, the indignant feeling excited by the merciless decree respecting the married clergy had never been appeased. The excommunicated king passed for a liberator, and the hope was strong in many minds that he would head a party of remonstrants, and avenge their quarrel and his own by active hostility.

ties against the Pope. These things were quickly reported to Gregory. He was no coward, and left to himself would rather confront a foe than avoid the meeting; but zealous friends persuaded him that his sacred person must not be risked, and that Henry would scruple at no crime. His journey to Mantua, therefore, was suspended, and he returned to Canosa, a fortress in the Apennines, famous already as one of the strongholds of Tuscany—about to be rendered more famous as the scene of a spectacle, remarkable, perhaps, and significant above any which mediæval chroniclers have reported.

It belonged to Matilda, known in the history of the times, as “The great Countess,” and second in importance only to the two great combatants whose encounter was close at hand. She had succeeded to her splendid inheritance while yet a child, and, as she grew up to womanhood, imbibed a passionate devotion to the cause of Gregory, which made her a most serviceable helper and ally. By the recent deaths of her husband and mother, she was left uncontrolled mistress of her vast possessions; and her ambition was to employ wealth and influence and power as best became a dutiful daughter of the Church. Beautiful in person, adorned with all female graces and accomplishments, learned enough to dispense with her Latin secretary in her extensive correspondence with the Sovereigns of Europe, wise and fearless enough to choose her own policy amid all the complications of Church controversies, and fierce wars, and court intrigues, she regarded the



aged Pope with mingled feelings of reverence and affection, and deemed herself honoured above all earthly potentates in being permitted to contribute of her ample resources to sustain and strengthen his cause.

At a later period, by a bequest which defrauded her heirs, while it made a large and most valuable addition to the territorial power of the Papacy, she gave over to Gregory and his successors the reversion of all the lands which were at her own disposal. Now, when men were choosing their sides, and the disaffection of Lombardy made Italian allies all-important to the interests of the Church, she gladly opened the gates of her almost impregnable castle to the Pope, and let all men know that, come what might, he had one fast friend, and powerful helper, from whom no gathering discontent, or impending danger, could ever separate him.

Danger, however, it soon appeared, there was none. Whatever Henry may have intended when he left Germany, whether, or not, some vague thoughts of taking up a menacing attitude may have crossed his mind, when he found so many to sympathise with him on his first arrival in Italy, the resolve was soon taken to be a suppliant, and nothing more,—in fact, to get the curse removed, whatever it might cost him. He approached Canosa, confidently hoping that unreserved submission would be followed by prompt forgiveness. Time pressed; and to stand before his princes and nobles as an absolved man was the boon which he craved

passionately, and would bow his royal head, even to meekness, that he might obtain without delay. He begged an interview with Matilda which was readily granted, now that the language of pride and contumacy was laid aside. Her mediation was implored and granted; as a woman and a queen she could hardly refuse it; and she went back gladly and hopefully to present Henry's suit to the Pope. She knew Gregory well, but not thoroughly. He was inexorable, and would have no dealings with the King of Germany, but as a public criminal; at Augsburg, in the following month, the question was to be decided whether he was fit to reign. At length he relented; but on conditions. "Let him first give his crown into my hands, and confess himself unworthy to retain his dignity." Things were not brought, however, to that pass: in no case, possibly, would Henry have descended so low. But, for once, Gregory retracted the spoken word, when murmurs of an displeasing sound were heard within the castle, and permission was given to the monarch to approach, but not yet to enter. Three courts had to be crossed; the outer one was for Henry's attendants; to the middle one he passed alone; another still lay between him and the entrance to the hall of audience.

"C'est alors que se passa dans les murs du château de Canosse," says M. Delécluze, the biographer and fervent eulogist of Gregory, "*ce drame de trois jours*, auquel on a peine à croire malgré les nombreux témoignages des historiens, et celui même du Pontife;" and a curious drama it was.

Henry was bare-footed, and clothed in the long white robe of penitence. The cold was intense; and from morning till evening he waited there, without food or shelter. Night came, and the gate to the inner court was still closed. Through the weary hours of another inclement day, the humbled sovereign, loth to lose the prize for which he had already paid so dearly, endured a repetition of the same indignities. On the third morning he was found at the same spot; but when evening came, he took shelter in a chapel, and there with tears besought the Countess Matilda to intercede for him. She consented; and to the prayers of the beautiful princess were added indignant words, spoken by friends of Gregory in his own presence; so the proud, hard man gave way at last. They met face to face,—the victor and the vanquished. Manhood in its prime was confronted with physical weakness and decay; for Henry was twenty-six, tall and of a noble presence, while Gregory, not many years past three score, was prematurely old, and the indomitable soul dwelt within a small, shrunken frame. “Have pity on me, Holy Father,” was Henry’s exclamation, as he threw himself at the feet of Gregory; and the Pope’s brief reply, “*It is enough*,” ended this mighty quarrel. Henry left his presence an absolved man; but he had subscribed and sworn to the following conditions. He was to submit himself unreservedly to the Diet at Augsburg, at which the Pope intended to preside. If the judgment went against him, he must bind himself by solemn vows to

descend to a private station. Meanwhile, no royal act was to be done; his rights were to be in abeyance; even the revenues of his kingdom were to be untouched, except for necessary purposes. Should he be acquitted, then from the Pope's hands he was to receive his kingdom, and promise to rule henceforth according to the Pope's bidding. Should Henry prove false, or fail in a single article of the treaty, the anathema would be laid on him again, and another king must be chosen for Germany without delay.

To that issue was the conflict brought between the representatives of imperial and priestly power. Whatever the future might be, the triumph of Canosa could never be forgotten. Let men dispute or struggle as they might, one precedent was safely laid up among bulls and decretals, to which appeal might be made whenever Rome found her imperious mandates resisted, or meditated some fresh encroachment. Emperors had deposed popes in other days; now the Pope judged kings; and the sovereigns of Europe stood silently by, while one of their number read his own sentence of degradation. Henry made it plain, before a month was out, that he was no devotee, following the dictates of a blinded conscience, when he stood an uncrowned monarch before the man whom he had insulted and defied. But neither was he a man who would run any personal risk for the sake of national rights, or the world's peace. Passion and self-interest were his only guides, and each swayed him in turn. His

endangered throne was everything in his eyes ; and for present safety he was willing to give this needful price in public dishonour.

Gregory had gained his end ; but his own partisans admit that he took an impolitic course in thus ostentatiously displaying his triumph,—thereby converting Henry into an implacable foe, and forcing princes and nobles to ask where this growing power was to stop. Perplexities soon arose which would have baffled a wiser man, and which new anathemas could not solve. Henry's Lombard partisans, instead of being quelled by the Pope's recent measures, received their humbled sovereign, as he returned from Canosa, with indignation and contempt. He had tarnished his honour ; he had betrayed their cause ; he had lifted the man whom they hated, to a yet greater height of presumption. Excommunicated bishops, who had talked openly of electing another pope, with the Archbishop of Ravenna at their head,—himself aspiring to be the successor of Gregory,—felt like men whose wall of defence was broken down, while the terrible enemy in their front was more powerful than ever. Henry's military followers, too, felt humbled in the person of their leader. He had left an army encamped a short distance from the fortress which witnessed his shame ; and now threats were uttered of marching to Rome with his son Conrad, and there getting a new pontiff to crown him king. How soon Henry intended to throw off the mask we cannot tell. Possibly his eye had been fixed

too exclusively upon Germany ; and while hoping to secure one crown by disgraceful compliances, he had overlooked the fact that his other sovereignty was actually endangered. To many of his Italian subjects, in fact,—themselves committed to a fierce quarrel with Gregory,—he seemed like a renegade and a traitor. Thus pressed, the absolved penitent soon spoke out like an indignant king, with old injuries unforgotten, and new insults rankling yet more deeply in his bosom. His army grew ; his friends became yet bolder ; his troops commanded the passes of the Alps, so that the Pope's approach to Germany was no longer possible ; even Canosa, where Gregory so lately won his crowning victory, became his prison ; for a rumour was spread abroad, true or false, that the king, if opportunity offered, would not scruple to seize his person ; and the faithful Matilda deemed her spiritual father nowhere so safe as under her immediate guardianship.

In March the German Diet met, not at Augsburg, but at Forheim. Absolved or unabsolved,—repentant or refractory,—Henry was odious to the men who convened it, and a candidate was ready, with courage enough to aspire to the throne which had been disgraced by past oppressions, as well as recent hypocrisy. Papal legates were present, and in compliance with Gregory's wishes or orders, dissuaded the council from deposing their sovereign. "Henry might have a longer probation-time ; delay could work no harm ; at least let no vote be taken till the Pope should come to guide their

decisions." The leaders, however, were men in earnest, and came to do a work which would not bear postponement. Rudolf of Swabia was elected king; the legates, compelled to choose their side, sanctioned his coronation with their presence; and Gregory, besides all else that he had done to provoke Henry to madness, was now committed to the cause of rebel subjects, and a formidable pretender.

German loyalty, however, was shocked by the sentence of deposition, and on both sides of the Alps Henry's fortunes, by a sudden rebound, advanced rapidly from their lowest point of depression to security and triumph. A fierce conflict ensued, the details of which do not fall within the scope of our narrative. All the horrors that war ever let loose upon mankind poured, like a wasting flood, over Saxony and Swabia, desolating fair cities and peaceful villages, and levelling with the dust a hundred castles in which the malcontent nobles had ruled like princes. Had Gregory's dream of a theocracy been possible, no fairer opportunity was ever given for one, who claimed authority from Heaven, to check the ravages of earthly passion, and interpose with words of peace between the infuriated combatants. Beautiful was the theory that one, who represented the Prince of Peace, might compose all feuds, restrain the mighty by the voice of meekness and wisdom, and fulfilling the glowing anticipations of ancient prophecy, compel the lion, in very deed, to lie down with the

lamb. But, alas ! who shall hear that voice when the storm waxes loudest, and to men of fiery courage war becomes the most exciting of pastimes ? And, alas ! who shall ensure for the mortal arbitrator the perfect equity, without which the whole scheme were an idle mockery ? In this time of trial Gregory himself was a miserable temporizer. He had helped to kindle the war, and now, uncertain who would prove the conqueror, he let it spend its force and extend its range, heedless, apparently, of the misery and ruin which it spread over almost half of Germany. Again and again the Saxons appealed to his justice and compassion, like men who felt themselves betrayed. “ You absolved us from the oath of allegiance to one king,” they said, “ your legates were present when we crowned another ; you never disowned their act ; the man we have chosen has promised obedience to the Church, and does but ask its blessing ; speak, therefore, so that Germany and Italy may hear and know what your judgment is respecting the points at issue, and to whom the obedience of Christian men is due.” Again and again vague, evasive answers were returned. He talked of the *two kings*, as if he had no preference for either ; claimed a safe conduct from them both, that he might personally decide upon their claims in Germany ; protested that obedience to the Church was the test whereby to try their merits ; but refused to heap fresh anathemas on Henry, or to pledge himself openly on either side. They were plain-spoken men, those Saxon leaders,



like one of their countrymen who had a controversy with popes some centuries afterwards, and thus indignantly they poured forth their complaints:—"See, dearest Lord, the earth is confounded, and reels to and fro. If thou wilt heal her wounds turn not back, and do not throw down what thine own hands have built up. If thou deniest that which thou hast done, and dost leave us amid the storm which we have dared for thee, then we call Heaven and earth to witness that we perish unjustly." Gregory replied with self-laudation, and pious phrases like the following:—"Dearest brethren, put away the thought, I charge you, that I would knowingly in any manner favour the unrighteous side. Much rather would I suffer death for your welfare than obtain the empire of the world by your ruin. If any, confident in falsehood, should inform you otherwise, believe him not. We fear God, and for His love are afflicted every day, and hold in less esteem the pride and pleasures of this life because we hope soon to be released from its sorrows, and to have abundant consolation in His presence."

For three whole years this indecision lasted. At the end of that time the Saxons had no better cause, but their arms had triumphed. In February, 1080, the news came to Rome that they had gained a great victory, and that Henry, having sustained a heavy loss, had retreated and disbanded his army. A council had been summoned to meet in that very month, and it was not allowed to disperse without

hearing the malediction repeated which had sounded forth from the same hall in the memorable Lent of 1076. Again Henry was excommunicated, again his throne was declared to be forfeited, for his "pride, disobedience, and falsehood," as well as his many crimes against his subjects. The oracle spoke unambiguously at last, and the election of Forcheim was ratified. Appealing, according to his wont, to the blessed saints, Peter and Paul, Gregory delivered himself thus:—"Acting in your names, and confiding in you, I give, grant, and concede that Rudolf, whom the Germans have elected to be their king, may rule and defend the German empire. In like confidence, I announce to all who shall adhere to him, the absolution of all their sins, and bestow upon them your blessing in this world and in that which is to come." If he had such gifts in store his Saxon allies might well think that he should have helped them sooner; for thousands of their countrymen had already fallen in this bloody quarrel who had no benefit from this comforting promise. Now, at any rate, men trusted it, for the world had grown familiar with impieties like these, and the approaching age of the Crusaders saw them largely multiplied. Besides dispensing pardons, however, Gregory was rash enough to turn prophet, and proved a false one. When Easter came he ventured solemnly and publicly to predict that, before St. Peter's day<sup>\*</sup>, which falls on the 29th of June, Henry would be dead, or his cause utterly ruined. The day came, and Henry was alive; and his partisans

were not scattered, but growing in numbers, and flushed with hope.

By that time, too, a decisive step had been taken which showed how many were found to sympathise with him in his resolve to crush his enemy, rather than yield or fly. At Brixen, in the Tyrol, as being central ground between Italy and Germany, a council was convened, which was attended by some thirty bishops, and a large body of nobles ; and there, in defiance of the decree of Pope Nicholas, far away from Rome, without the presence of a single cardinal, they took upon themselves to elect a pope. It was strangely irregular according to mediæval notions ; though what right Roman cardinals have to choose a ruler for all Christendom that German bishops have not, it may puzzle a wise man to say, who takes Scripture or common sense, or the early history of the Church, for his guide ; but, at any rate, it showed that the men were in earnest,—that some were found whom the name of Gregory had not cowed into abject submission,—and that, on both sides of the Alps, his enemies would have a rallying-point which would increase their strength and multiply his dangers. Their choice fell on Guibert, Archbishop of Ravenna, a man of turbulent, ambitious spirit, a bitter opponent of the modern policy of Rome, and burdened with the imputation of having prompted the outrage on the person of the Pope on Christmas Eve, 1075.

The men, who had dared to set up a rival to Gregory, of course did their best to justify their

deed ; so terms of reproach were heaped up without stint. They have a vague sound, however, and considering the importance of the step, there is a strange absence of specific charges. The most definite accusation, strange to say, is one of heresy ; which, considering the points at issue, and the character of some of the judges, Henry himself among the number, might well have been left to some other tribunal. Gregory is styled among other things, “the impugner of the catholic and apostolic doctrine concerning the body and blood of the Lord.” The fact was, Berengarius of Tours had written on the Lord’s Supper in a style which contradicted, or seemed to contradict, the doctrine of Transubstantiation, now fast attaining popularity in the Church. It was an old story ; for, thirty years before, Lanfranc had accused him before Leo IX. and procured a sentence of condemnation ; but the charge had been revived recently, and Berengarius had been summoned to Rome. He was compelled to sign a form of belief on the controverted subject, which satisfied Gregory, but was not thought positive enough by men of stricter orthodoxy. For once the Pope was undecided and vacillating. “The accused, he fully believed, was sound in the faith ; Augustine had written in the same strain ; but lest he should err, he had referred the matter to the blessed Virgin. A monk, on whom he relied, had besought her aid with prayer and fasting ; and by the answer which he brought, Berengarius was acquitted ; for he had written nothing contrary to

Holy Scripture." This new court of appeal from councils and theologians was not approved by many; every thing was eagerly caught at which could damage Gregory in the eyes of the stricter churchmen; accordingly, the charge of favouring a heretic, and of entertaining a superstitious fondness for dreams and divinations, was revived, and had a place, along with many other hard names, in the articles of accusation presented at Brixen.

Germany, then, had two rival kings; and each king had on his side one who bore the title of pope. But Guibert, or Clement III. as he styled himself, who had some importance and dignity while, as archbishop, he withstood Gregory in the plenitude of his power, sank to comparative insignificance when he travelled about in the train of the King of Germany. His rival of Italy, on the other hand, rather gained power, than lost it, by a measure which shocked all lovers of unity, and made the hope of peace, for which many sighed, yet more distant. Numbers, who doubted about the Pope's power of deposing kings, felt assured that an assembly, such as Henry had gathered about him to avenge his quarrel, was not competent to sit in judgment on the man to whom nearly all the European kingdoms deferred as the Vicar of Christ. But conflicting principles were soon lost sight of in the fury of a contest which divided families and towns and provinces into hostile factions. Appeals were made to religion on one side, and to patriotism on the other; but the real arbiter was the sword of the strongest and the

bravest; and a wide-spread partisan warfare, kindled by rivalry and hate, and burning more fiercely from year to year, spread havoc from the Elbe to the Danube.

One of the rival kings perished before the year was ended; but it was Rudolf, not Henry. He fell in the hour of victory, pierced by the lance of one whose name has grown famous in prose and poetry, Godfrey of Bouillon. The death of a popular leader, who was also a brave and skilful general, more than counterbalanced the loss to Henry of a single battle; and the day of his rival's death was rendered doubly memorable by a decisive advantage gained in Lombardy. His forces met and dispersed the army of Matilda. Thus the way was cleared for the king into Southern Italy, if he chose to seek his great enemy in his capital. To this point his wishes were tending. To make the Pope drink the cup of humiliation in his turn, and drink it to the dregs, had been the passionate desire of his soul ever since the day of his own deep disgrace. Leaving Saxony, therefore, in arms behind him, after a vain attempt to persuade the rebel leaders to accept his son for their king, he crossed the Alps, to seek Gregory again; but now in another guise and another mood. By Easter 1081 he was at Verona, and, receiving the submission of many of the towns of Tuscany in his progress, before Whitsuntide he was under the walls of Rome.

“In the presence of such danger, the gallant spirit of the ancient Pope once more rose and exulted.

He convened a synod to attest his last defiance of the formidable enemy. He exhorted the German princes to elect a successor to Rudolf. In letters of impassioned eloquence, he again maintained his supremacy over all the kings and rulers of mankind. He welcomed persecution as the badge of his holy calling; and while the besiegers were at the gates, he disposed (at least in words) of royal crowns and distant provinces. Matilda supplied him with money which, for a while, tranquillised the Roman populace. In language such as martyrs use, he consoled the partners of his sufferings. In language such as heroes breathe, he animated the defenders of the city.\* Rome was to be guarded; his partisans throughout Italy were to be exhorted to do valiantly, or bear their losses and sufferings with the patience of confessors; but Germany was not forgotten; and among the most curious of the letters, filling many volumes, which attest his marvellous industry, is one of this date to the Bishop of Metz, written in answer to enquiries, made for himself and others, on the subject of allegiance to

\* Sir James Stephen's *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, i. pp. 77, 8. The same volume, which contains his instructive and eloquent narrative of the Life and Times of Hildebrand, gives us a wise, comprehensive, and impartial estimate of Luther's character and doings. Side by side with the man who constructed the wondrous edifice of the papal sovereignty, we see the other, who shook it to its foundations. Seldom has the same hand drawn two such portraits with such admirable skill, and such judicial fairness.

rulers who were warring with the Church. A long quotation will be well worth perusing. Strange were the times when such poor declamation passed for argument! Strange the men who listened reverently to such railing against God's ordinance of civil government, and fancied the morality set forth was the morality of the New Testament!—

“Shall not that dignity, which was invented by worldly men, who were ignorant of God, be deemed subject to that which the Providence of Almighty God devised for His own honour, and bestowed upon the world in mercy? Who knows not that kings and princes had their beginning from those who, in a spirit of blind cupidity and intolerable presumption, aimed at dominion over their fellow-men,—using for their means rapine and perfidy and bloodshed, and led on by the devil, the prince of this world? While they attempt to bend the priests of the Lord to their will, to whom may they be more aptly compared than to him who is head over all the children of pride,—who, tempting the High Priest, the Head of priests, the Son of the Most High, and offering Him all the kingdoms of the earth, said, ‘*All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me?*’ When a Christian king approaches his end, that he may escape the dungeon of hell, and, passing from darkness into light, may appear before God's judgment-seat absolved from the bonds of sin, he piteously implores the aid of a priest. But what man, priest or layman, lying at the point of death, ever im-



plored, for the weal of his soul, the assistance of an earthly king? What king or emperor, in virtue of his office, is able to snatch a Christian by Holy Baptism from the devil's power, and enrol him among the children of God? From the beginning of the world to our own time, we find no emperors or kings whose lives have been so exalted by religion, or adorned by the gifts of miracles, as were those of an innumerable multitude of despisers of this world. For (not to speak of Apostles and martyrs) what emperor or king ever rivalled the miraculous powers of the blessed Martin, Anthony, or Benedict? What emperor or king ever raised the dead, cleansed the leper, gave sight to the blind? Look at Constantine, that emperor of pious memory, at Theodosius, Honorius, Charles, and Louis,—men who were lovers of justice, propagators of Christianity, defenders of Churches. The holy Church praises them, indeed, and venerates their memories; but she bears no witness to their having shone with such supernatural power. How many are the kings to whose names she has directed that temples should be dedicated? Princes should ever fear that in proportion to their exaltation in this world will be the fires of their punishment in that which is to come; as it is written, '*Mighty men shall be mightily tormented.*'\* For they must render an account for as many souls as they boast of subjects;

\* The quotation is from the Apocryphal Book of Ecclesiasticus, vi. 6.

and if the man has no light task who, in a private station, has to keep watch over a single soul, how endless must be the labour imposed on the prince who has to give an account of thousands ! Let those, therefore, whom the holy Church, by her own act and deliberate counsel, elevates to government, not for the sake of transitory glory, but for the welfare of the many, learn humbly to obey. Let them not seek to subject the holy Church as a bondmaid to their will ; but let them strive, as befits them, to honour the priests of the Lord as their masters and fathers. Acting with humility on principles like these, walking in the love of God, and in charity towards their neighbours, let them confide in the mercy of Him who said, ‘ *Learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart ;* ’ whom, if they humbly imitate, they shall pass, in due time, from a subordinate and transitory kingdom to one where they shall be truly free, and live for ever.” Never, certainly, was humility preached in a tone of more lordly assumption. If kings were to be contented with subjection, because “ the mighty were to be mightily tormented,” one marvels what safeguards were needful for the man who aimed at dominion over them all. “ The prince who has to give an account of thousands,” is spoken of with compassion, as one whose salvation is in the utmost peril. Higher and vaster responsibilities, surely, must be laid upon the man who, even then, was claiming to be above all earthly potentates, and to have many kingdoms subject to him instead of one.

When Henry first approached Rome he hoped for an easy conquest. The Pope, he thought, before long, would either come to his terms, or in the event of continued opposition would be a prisoner in his power, and shorn of more than half his strength. But at the end of two years he was master only of a portion of the city, including, however, the trophies of St. Peter's, and the Vatican ; while Gregory kept possession of all on the left bank of the Tiber, and retained the precarious allegiance of his Roman subjects by means of largesses, which the never-failing bounty of the Countess Matilda enabled him to supply. Still, shut in as he was, dependent on the favour of a fickle populace, deserted by many who thought the long strife was almost ended and that Henry was the winner, the Pope was unyielding as ever. When the king proposed to withdraw his armies if Gregory would crown him Emperor of Germany, and the citizens implored him, with tears, to put an end to their sufferings by compliance, he would consent only on condition of Henry "making amends to God and His Church for his notorious sins against both"—a sweeping reserve which the king well understood as binding him to do all that the Pope had ever demanded, and much that he was resolved not to do while he had subjects and soldiers to stand by him.

In November, 1083, two years and a-half after the first assault on Rome, a council was assembled in the Lateran, small in numbers as compared with

many over which Gregory had presided, and there to the faithful few he addressed himself, says the friendly historian, "more like an Angel than a man." His spirit-stirring appeal was answered by tears and sobs—nought else could they give—and the hope of relief grew fainter every month. A fresh supply of gold kept the base Romans quiet through another winter, then their patience was exhausted; and in March, 1084, the gates were opened to Henry. He entered and took possession, along with the Pope of his own creation. The one was consecrated, at St. Peter's, on Palm Sunday, and the other crowned Emperor of the West on Easter Day.

Gregory meanwhile was safe in the strongly-fortified Castle of St. Angelo. Henry must storm it to reach his prey. But before that attempt was made the news reached him that Robert Guiscard, the Norman Duke of Apulia, the Pope's fast friend, was approaching Rome by rapid marches, and with an army greatly outnumbering the German forces. He had lingered long—had come too late to save the city from capture, but now, when all seemed lost, a host of champions, horsemen six thousand, and foot soldiers five times as many, came to the rescue. Henry took a hasty leave of his partisans in Rome, saying his presence was required in Lombardy, and fled away, leaving the citizens to defend themselves, or to make terms as they could. These unhappy men, famished and exhausted, had stood one long siege, and had neither strength nor heart

for another, of which the result could hardly be doubtful. A feeble resistance of three days ended in capture, and Rome was again sacked by barbarians. Guiscard's army, besides his Normans, accustomed to a roving, military life, contained troops of vagabond Italians, whom the hope of plunder attracted to his standard, and a large body of Saracen horsemen, unscrupulous as common mercenaries—aliens, moreover, in faith—to whom licence and booty in the capital of Christendom would have a double zest. These strange liberators of the Pope dealt with his city as ruthless savages, to whom the restraints of civilised warfare were unknown. All the horrors with which history has made us familiar when victorious armies have rioted in the streets of some devoted city, were repeated in their most hideous forms. Fire and sword went hand in hand. For a while no quarter was given, no sanctuary safe, no villainy unperpetrated. Homes, churches, convents were all invaded and polluted, and when slaughter had done its work Guiscard, still unappeased, sold thousands into slavery, and carried them back with him to Calabria. The bulk of the citizens had turned rebels against the Pope, they had been leagued with the excommunicated king; and in his character of champion of the Holy See, this man, recently pardoned by Gregory for his own former misdeeds, thought no vengeance too sweeping.

From his prison in the castle Gregory was conducted, with all honour, through smoking ruins, to the Lateran Palace. *He* did not fire the city, nor

give it as a prey to savages, but, to his eternal disgrace, he did not separate himself by word or deed from the man who was responsible for the wide-wasting devastation. He left Rome in Guiscard's company, he took refuge from the indignation of his subjects, or from his own remorseful feelings, in Guiscard's Castle of Salerno. A few months only of life remained ; his troubled reign of twelve years was drawing to a close. In his exile he roused himself for a last effort against his enemies, and as if repetition could make the maledictions of earth more sure to be ratified in Heaven, he thundered out the sentence of excommunication once more against the false Emperor, and false Pope, and all their adherents of every degree. His admirers tell us that he was "wholly occupied" in his last days "with meditation on divine things," that he "had no pleasure but in reading holy books." Dying speeches prove but little ; but from one who had lorded it so proudly over God's heritage we would gladly have heard some note of humiliation, when his great trust had to be surrendered to the Searcher of all hearts. No such note has reached us. To the last he speaks like one whose grand designs for the world's good had been defeated by the perverseness of mankind. He lived on to the 25th of May, 1085, and cardinals and bishops, who watched by him as he sank to death, received and published, as his latest testimony, the following words, containing a strange parody on a portion of the 45th Psalm :—" *I have loved righteousness and hated wickedness, and therefore I die in exile.*"

Who shall fathom the depths of a heart like his? What human power of discernment shall sift the worthy from the vile, and determine how much of zeal for God's honour and the Church's purity, according to his estimate of things, was mingled with base, earthly motives? Doubtless, there was a vision of beauty before his eyes,—that of power subordinated to justice,—the potentates of this world listening reverently to men lifted by their office above the sphere of vulgar humanity,—order preserved, and strifes ended, by decrees issuing from a court, guided in some mysterious way, to what was right and true. Doubtless, too, there was a false principle at work in all his efforts to raise the priesthood and the popedom to a height of power which would have made civil government only the handmaid of an ecclesiastical corporation, with rules and interests and sympathies of its own. We see that the vision was a dream; to make it a reality, agents were wanted, such as this sinful world does not supply. We see, too, how the scheme, which he laboured to perfect, is contrary to the whole genius of Christianity, and how its partial development has despoiled the Church of its strength, and filled the world with confusion. He argued from false premises to a false conclusion, and produced a system which was at once severely logical, and grossly unscriptural. But, at any rate, he left the impress of a mighty genius on succeeding ages, and Innocent III., in the plenitude of his undisputed sovereignty, did but re-assert what his

predecessor first had the hardihood to maintain openly before God and man. Gregory's long quarrel with Henry, and the manifestoes and letters which it called forth,—his fierce anathemas, uncontradicted asseverations, and impassioned appeals to Heaven—all rang in the ears of monarchs and nobles, till they became familiar with the sound, and many voices seemed to repeat what was but the echo of one thundering peal. What each successive pope had a deep interest in affirming, it did not specially concern any faction to deny; and so the arrogant pretensions of the boldest grew, by prescription, into a sort of public law. Moreover, kings betrayed their cause, partly by making compromises for their own immediate gain, and partly by accepting the aid of papal censure to teaze or humble their rivals. Thus the edifice grew which, for a while, overshadowed every throne in Europe; but it was Hildebrand who laid the foundations deep, gave it form and coherence, and built up some of its strongest bulwarks.



## BERNARD.

WE pass from Hildebrand to St. Bernard—from the proudest of men to one of the humblest. They were parted by six years only, Bernard being born in the year 1091. He has sometimes been called *the last of the Fathers*. Luther describes him as “a man so holy that he is to be commended and preferred before them all.” His contemporaries went yet further, and gave him the honourable title of *The Thirteenth Apostle*. Dean Milman, when he reaches the point in his narrative at which Bernard becomes prominent, says, “the Pope ceases to be the centre around whom gather the great events of Christian history,” while the man whose story we are about to tell is at once “the leading and governing head of Christendom.”

Bernard exactly fills up the space between Gregory VII. and Innocent III., the latter having been born seven years after his death. Looking at the external aspect of things, these two men stand before us as the pillars of the Papacy in the middle ages. They forced kings to tremble on their thrones; they tamed the hierarchy to abject servitude; they made Rome the seat of a second empire, as marvellous and as firmly compacted, though

without legions and proconsuls, as the first with all its visible elements of material strength. Yet it may be doubted whether the men who spoke so loftily, and held the sceptre of dominion with so firm a grasp, did as much to prolong the dominion of error as those more single-minded men who derived their lustre from their piety and humility. The moral sense of mankind would have revolted sooner against the arrogance, and rapacity, and lust of power which were embodied in the worst popes, if some had not been found, in the humbler ranks of the clergy, who won their veneration by self-denying labours and saintly virtues. Cavillers were silenced, and doubters satisfied ; while devout and simple-minded persons turned their eyes away from Courts and high places, where the Church often acted the part of a miserable, time-serving intriguer, to monasteries and secluded places, in different parts of Christendom, still fragrant with the memories of some of God's holiest servants.

Bernard was born of a noble family, at Fontaines, near Dijon. His father was a man-at-arms, and had six sons, who grew up to manhood. In an age when fighting was the ordinary vocation for men of knightly birth, most of them were likely to follow him to the field, and win gold or fame in some of the wars, which were never far distant from their homes. But their mother, Aletta—as famous in Church history as Monica, the mother of Augustine—longed to see them dedicate their early manhood to what she deemed a far nobler service. Her own

life was divided between the exercises of devotion, the religious training of her children, and visits of mercy to the neighbouring poor. Vigils and fasts were added in more than ordinary measure. William, the Abbot of St. Thierry, to whom we owe an incomplete, but precious life of her son, tells us that, eschewing the world's vanities, she lived a life of religious seclusion, and approached as near to perfection as is permitted to one who is married, and hindered by worldly distractions. Such was the monkish standard of measurement, and Aletta had the same. She coveted for her sons what was denied to herself, and longed to see them all dwelling with religious men, on holy ground, and completely secluded from the engagements and temptations of ordinary life.

Bernard was her third son, and a remarkable dream at the time of his birth fixed her thoughts specially on him, as destined for eminent service in the Church. He was sent to a school of some reputation at Châtillon, and there, besides outstripping his competitors in the severer studies of the age, he showed a taste for poetry and polite literature, acquiring a mastery over the Latin tongue which enabled him to write it and preach in it with ease. He returned home an accomplished youth, but without that depth and earnestness of religious feeling which the mother valued above all human learning. The blessing of her prayers and pious example was granted to him for six months only after their reunion, but the last scene of her

life was one which might well stamp all her previous instructions indelibly on his memory. It is thus recorded by one who stood by her dying bed, and joined in the parting prayer :—

“ Aletta was accustomed to celebrate the festival of St. Ambrose, the patron of the Church of Fontaines, by an annual feast, to which the neighbouring clergy were invited. On the vigil of that day she was seized with a violent fever, which confined her to her bed. The next morning she requested that the Holy Communion might be administered to her, and feeling strengthened after its reception, she desired that the clergy would sit down to the feast she had provided. While they were at table she sent for her eldest son, Guido, and desired that he would request the company to repair to her chamber as soon as the repast was ended. When they were assembled, and standing round her bed, Aletta calmly announced that the moment of her departure was at hand, and entreated their prayers. The ministers of the Lord began to read the Litany, Aletta herself making the responses so long as her breath lasted ; but when the choir reached that versicle, *‘By Thy Cross and Passion, Good Lord deliver us !’* the dying woman, commending her soul to God, raised her hand to make the sign of the Cross, and in that attitude she expired, giving up her spirit to the Angels, by whom it was carried to the abodes of the just.”

The loving monitress was gone, and the high-born youth, not yet twenty, was thrown into the society of those who loved pleasure, and would gladly have had him for the companion of their mirth. Boisterous sports, however, had no charms for him, and from vicious indulgences his conscience, and his delicacy of mind, alike revolted. The more dangerous lure was that of worldly ambition ; and among his associates were some who were devoting

themselves to study, in the hope of winning the prizes of scholarship on some public stage. His talents might have ensured success in that department; but, unpledged himself, he felt upon him the tie of a mother's vow. Her loving counsels, and whispered hopes for the future, were often in his ears, and his waking dreams embodied themselves in shadowy visions, till her saintly countenance seemed to meet him, and chide him for his tardiness. His elder brothers were men of war, and, one day, he was on his way to visit them in camp, when grave thoughts about life, and its vicissitudes and obligations, occupied his mind, and suddenly, the words were brought to him, as if spoken in the depths of his heart: *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* His journey was suspended, and his resolve was taken. He entered a church by the road-side, and, prostrating himself before the altar, vowed that henceforth his life should be devoted to God.

From that day he was a destined monk. His home lessons, and the authority of the Church, had taught him that no life was so safe or honourable,—that, among religious men, bound by vows to celibacy and poverty and works of charity, God might be served as He could not be served in the busy walks of life. The ordinary service of the Church was too uniform,—too much a matter of ceremony and routine,—to satisfy a soaring spirit.

like his. One path, and one alone, according to the perverted morality of the age, led to Christian perfection; and perfection was what he intensely longed for, and struggled after in his own way, at any cost. He would not walk alone, however, on his heavenward journey. His affectionate nature yearned over his kindred; he longed to see them leave the world behind them (to use the current language of the day), and follow the course to which he was irrevocably pledged. His life of wonders began with the marvel of persuading *four* out of his *five* brothers to leave the wars,—to forsake their young and gay companions,—to renounce a station which combined worldly ease with honour and consideration among the nobles of Burgundy,—and to place themselves at his disposal, with a life of self-denial and religious seclusion in prospect. Two, younger than himself, with a military career just opening before them, were the first won; and straightway, instead of seeking knighthood by feats of arms, they declared themselves willing to follow wherever he should lead. The second, next above Bernard in age, held out, and manifested some indignation at this new disturbing element in a household hitherto united by common pursuits and objects. We need not believe, as his biographer asserts, that the saint turned prophet, saying as he pointed to his brother's heart, "At this point a lance will pierce thy side, and thus a way shall be opened for the Word which as yet thou despisest;" but certain it is that a severe wound, received in

battle shortly afterwards, gave a new current to the young soldier's thoughts, and when he recovered, he was quickly at Bernard's side.

With the eldest, Guido, the struggle was yet harder. He had acquired distinction in public life, he was married to a lady who had borne him children, and to whom he was tenderly attached; yet he was not spared. The same prize was within his reach, and the dearest earthly delights were a poor substitute for a higher place among the blest. The husband and father listened and believed in the jargon which meets us perpetually in monkish writers, and which is copied by their imitators in modern times.\* We are told how he longed for

\* Some of it is worth quoting. Thus the painful story runs, as told, not by some mediæval chronicler, but by L'Abbé Marie Théodore Ratisbonne, in his *Histoire de Saint Bernard*, published in 1843. No apology is attempted—there is no reservation in the language which commends this unnatural war on the domestic affections. The man did well, we are taught, who “put asunder” those whom “God had joined together,” and is to be honoured for his triumph as for an act of victorious faith:—

“Guido, entraîné par le désir de la perfection évangélique, souhaitait ardemment de quitter le monde pour Jésus Christ; et il promit d'accomplir ce vœu si, d'après les règles de l'Eglise, sa femme y voulait consentir. Toutefois, ce consentement lui semblait presque impossible de la part d'une jeune épouse, déjà mère, qui l'aimait avec tendresse. Mais à l'heure même, Bernard, avec l'accent d'une inspiration supérieure, lui répondit ou que sa femme consentirait, ou bien qu'elle mourrait. Des ouvertures furent faites à cette femme éplorée, et nulle considération ne put la résoudre.”

deliverance from his first vow, that he might bind himself with a second; how the lady, like a good wife and mother, would not hear of a separation; how the gentleman was brought thereby into great perplexity, which was terminated by "a miracle of grace," for the wife fell ill, and sent for Bernard, and told him that she, like her husband, had heard a call, which she must obey. And then, by mutual consent, they parted, and the holy man carried away his brother in triumph; while his partner, thus forced from her home, took refuge in a monastery. What became of the children the narrator does not stop to tell us. Possibly an orphan house

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à vivre séparée de son mari; elle mit en usage les inépuisables ressources que son cœur lui suggérerait pour ébranler la vocation de Guido; et celui-ci, dont l'âme était droite et généreuse, ne voulait ni renoncer à ses vœux, ni accabler d'affliction la mère de ses enfants. Les perplexités, qu'il éprouva dans cette cruelle situation, sont plus faciles à pressentir qu'à dépeindre. La lutte fut violente, mais elle ne dura pas longtemps; un miracle de grâce la fit cesser. Bernard arrive; c'est la femme de Guido elle-même qui l'appelle; elle veut le voir; elle veut lui ouvrir son âme. Malade et frappée d'une anxiété étrange, elle a entendu dans son cœur la voix mystérieuse qui a parlé au cœur de son mari; elle veut se consacrer comme lui au Dieu d'amour qui l'attire par les plus irrésistibles attraits de la grâce; et à l'instant même, en la présence de Guido et de Bernard, elle prononce ses vœux, et recouvre soudainement la santé du corps, et la paix de l'âme. Les deux époux ne tardèrent point à réaliser leurs saintes résolutions; et après avoir pris de part et d'autre les mesures indiquées en de semblables occurrences, ils se séparèrent et suivirent leur haute vocation."



was provided for those who were made orphans, not by the will of God, but by the perverseness and infatuation of man !

Bernard's zeal carried him beyond his home, and he pleaded earnestly with friends and neighbours, almost as if their salvation were in peril anywhere but within convent walls. His impassioned appeals prevailed with many whose thoughts had hitherto run in quite another track ; and, among others, with one of his uncles, a man of high character, and extensive influence, whose secession from active life excited much surprise. Then the question came of a residence for this new band of recruits. Monasticism had fallen into disrepute with many since the religious orders, which once commanded the admiration of mankind, had sunk into habits of ease and luxury ; but it had the attribute of renewing its youth.\* Perpetually the old convents were gaining wealth, and losing reputation ; then some fresh set of devotees would follow some selected leader, build a new house, and impose on themselves a stricter rule. Thus the Cistercian Order had sprung up at Citeaux, on the borders of Champagne and Burgundy, where a little band of men, pledged by solemn vows to God and each other, were bringing the rude wilderness into cultivation, and leading a life of rigid self-mortification. Here, at present, was the poorest of monasteries, in the

See Milman's *Latin Christianity*, III., 328-31, where the reader will find an admirably condensed description of the process of decay and revival.

rudest of neighbourhoods. Here Bernard made sure of finding congenial companions ; so to Citeaux he directed his steps, in the year 1113, the leader of a troop of thirty, all won by his personal solicitations, and prepared for the severe task-work and multiplied privations, which he had painted to them with perfect frankness.

Another domestic scene must be referred to before we open the first chapter in Bernard's monastic life. The five brothers had to take leave of their aged father, of his one remaining son, and of a sister, who was growing up to take the Lady Aletta's place in the old castle. "*Il avait longtemps que Tecetin considérait avec anxiété les voies de ses enfants,*" says our modern Abbé—and no wonder—"se voir privé dans ses vieux jours des plus justes espérances de toute sa vie, c'en était trop pour un viellard courbé sous le poids de l'âge." Too much, indeed ! and so thought his daughter, Hombeline, who loved all her brothers, but loved Bernard with a special love, and now assailed him with tears and reproaches, as having brought ruin upon their house. She besought him to have pity on the old man's grey hairs, on her own unprotected weakness, on the poor youth her brother, who needed guidance and counsel as he grew towards manhood ; but all in vain. Even Nivard, the youngest-born, was not spared. Thus the story runs in the chronicle which recounts, with a tone of triumph, every fresh recruit gained in this warfare. The boy was playing near the house

when his brothers left it, and the eldest, thinking to please him, said, at parting, "House and lands ! look at them, child ; they will all be yours." "What !" replied the youth, "Heaven for you, and Earth for me—that's no fair bargain," and shortly afterwards the fair inheritance was left behind, and he, too, turned his steps towards Citeaux. A few years went by, and then old Tecetin followed him. His daughter was married, his home was empty ; convinced or unconvinced that the monastic life was surely the best, no wonder that the old man sought the place where his sons all dwelt together. His last days were cheered with their company, and he died in Bernard's arms.

At Citeaux Bernard's new life began ; and there two years were spent, besides the year of his novitiate. The purity of his character, and the fervour of his devotions, made him a marked man at once among his associates, while all hearts were attracted to him by a temper of singular sweetness, and by a demeanour which combined the Christian clothing of humility with the courtesies of a high-born gentleman. Much of his occupation was in the fields, as was customary with newly-formed brotherhoods, who had their own territory to fence, and clear, and till ; but the peaceful labours of husbandry were well suited to a mind like his. In the fields and woods he found his oratory ; and, according to his own testimony in after life, much that he taught to admiring followers was first learnt amid his out-door meditations on this world and

the next. "The oaks and beeches," he said, "were his teachers." The reputation of the house grew rapidly, till it could not contain the numbers which came thronging to its gate. Then the full hive swarmed. Three times in three years the abbot, Stephen Harding, an Englishman of congenial spirit with Bernard, sent out companies of men to erect a new home of civilization, and another temple for worship, wherever a favourable site could be procured. The third set of colonists had Bernard for their leader. He sallied forth, with twelve monks under him, halted at a desolate place, once the haunt of banditti, called the Valley of Wormwood, and choosing a goodlier name, which soon grew famous throughout Europe, became the founder and youthful abbot of the monastery of Clairvaux.

His biographers dwell at large on this period of his life, and describe the privations, amounting almost to famine, of early days—the merciless self-discipline which permanently enfeebled a naturally vigorous constitution—the admirable rule, which none might break, tempered with mildness and forbearance—besides the busy labours of the brotherhood, which turned the desert into a garden—labours shared by all alike, and cheered often with hymns of praise. All is written with a glowing pen, and one is compelled to make some deductions on account of the exaggerated style which taints the Hagiography of the Romish Church,—as when we are gravely told that strangers, even of the common sort, if they visited the spot where the

monks were toiling silently in file, not only refrained from idle or jesting words while the vision lasted, but could not harbour any thoughts save those which were solemn, and suited to the place. But, after some of the adornments are stripped off, enough remains to make up a picture on which the eye gladly reposes in that age of turbulence and strife. Bernard's name and influence, undoubtedly, repelled the unworthy, and attracted new members, to whom the strictest discipline was a welcome restraint. Warriors came to rest there, after the rough work of life was done. Men of gentle birth, after finding themselves weak against the temptations to crime which were rife in a lawless age, took shelter amid peaceful scenes, where they had the opportunity of repentance, and helps for devotion. The monastic life, in fact, was exhibited in its fairest aspect; and if we look at the hardy men of Clairvaux, clearing the forest and breaking up the soil with axe and spade, listening to its abbot, still young in years, but mature in the highest wisdom, as their spiritual guide, and winning the veneration of rustic neighbours by intellectual superiority and by serviceable deeds of charity, we may well qualify the harsh and sweeping censures in which later writers have indulged. They were no "lazy monks" who wrought willingly at works like these. Not for gain, or credit, or selfish enjoyment, did men, who left mansions and estates behind them, sow, and plant, and build, reaping at first a scanty harvest for their pains, and keeping famine at bay

by hard toil or skilful husbandry. We moderns see fair structures in ruins, and hear of abuses which grew out of hoarded wealth and exclusive privileges; but men like Bernard and his fellows, besides witnessing for God in bad times, and checking the rude licence of powerful chieftains by precept and example, were the pioneers of civilization, teachers of useful arts, the benefactors, in many ways, of the neighbourhood in which their lot was chosen.

From the writings of Bernard himself, however, we may easily collect evidence to show how widely different was the reality, in many cases, from the beautiful ideal which was before his eyes. *Luxury in a convent* was the evil thing he hated; and his unsparing pen exposes some of the abuses which he longed to see purged away at any cost. Better, he thought, to proclaim the disease on the housetops, than to let it work its mischief under the veil of secrecy; so having, at a later date, spoken disparagingly of the discipline of Cluny, and been challenged to make his assertions good, he wrote what he called his *Apology*, addressed to his friend the Abbot of St. Thierry. He begins by indignantly disclaiming jealousy of rival orders, saying that spare diet, mean clothing, hard toil, with watchings and fastings, making up a life of singular austerity, would profit but little, if, like the Pharisees, he boasted himself above better men. "Woe, double woe," he cries, "upon the men who affect to carry the Cross of Christ, and to share His Passion, with-

out learning humility and charity; they afflict themselves to win honour in this life, but for their pride they shall be thrust down to hell; they follow Christ in His poverty, but shall never reign with Him in glory."

Then, after speaking eloquently of the bond of charity which should unite the religious orders as members in one body, of the several duties assigned to each, and of the different modes of discipline suited to men's varying necessities, he speaks, without disguise or reserve, of the departure from ancient simplicity of living, yet sadly too, like one who was laying open the wounds of the friend he loved. The details are curious, and a portion of them are well worth quoting as an illustration of the history of the times, showing how luxury had invaded convents, and how good men mourned for the degeneracy which they knew not how to check. Speaking of Cluny, once so famed for purity, he writes:—

"I know it is said that holy fathers prescribed the rule in the first instance, and tempered its severity for weaker brethren, that more might be saved by embracing it. But never will I believe that they commanded or permitted such excess as I have seen in most of the monasteries I have visited. I wonder how such extravagance could ever be allowed among men devoted to a religious life,—extravagance in meats and drinks, in garments and bed-furniture, in carriages and buildings; and the thing is not only allowed, but the more pains are bestowed on such indulgences—the more profuse and reckless the expenditure, the better the reputation of the house, and all the more is religion said to flourish. Economy, now-a-day, passes for niggardliness;

sober living is denounced as austere ; silence is confounded with melancholy. On the other hand, evil things are called by good names, so that relaxation of rules is styled prudent discretion, profuse expenditure is liberal house-keeping, idle talk bespeaks a kindly nature, jesting is but cheerfulness, and fine clothes and fine houses are signs of good breeding."

"Things are sadly changed," he adds, "since the good old days of St. Anthony, and the men who followed him in holy living, when visits were exchanged between religious houses, and the day was spent in edifying discourse, meals being forgotten while the soul was fed."

"Now, on the other hand, nothing from Holy Scripture, nothing about the soul's salvation, is heard at meetings of this sort ; but only talk about trifles, interspersed with jokes and laughter. While the feast goes on, the ears are filled and sated with gossip, which is so absorbing that no bounds are set, and no self-restraint is practised. One mess succeeds another ; instead of meat, from which it is thought fitting to abstain, two courses of the finest fish are supplied ; and when you have had your fill of the first, the second will make you forget that you have even tasted it, for the cooking is so exquisite that, after four or five platefulls have been devoured, the appetite is still fresh for more. What shall I say about water, when it is not allowed even to be mixed with the wine? For all of us, forsooth, from the moment we are monks, have *the infirmity of stomach* that the Apostle speaks of, only his injunction about the *little wine* is forgotten. And I wish that we were content with one sort of wine undiluted ; but shame ! shame ! three or four times over in a single dinner, you will see a goblet carried about half full, that, after the liquor has been nicely examined, smelt, and sipped, the strongest may be selected for use."

The men who fared so delicately must needs be curious, too, in the quality of their clothing ; and



so the faithful censor records that the monk's garb, once the badge of humility, has lost its character, and is proudly worn, now that the shape only remains, while the material is that which soldiers or kings need not disdain to wear. The tricks of convents are exposed, too, and held up to scorn. Hale men, in the prime of life, sham ill that they may live outside the walls in the house of invalids, and have the more generous diet which is allowed to sick members, and sleep through the hours appointed for nocturnal devotions. "Shall I laugh or weep?" says the indignant reprovcr; "the sick man must carry a staff to mark him out as a privileged person; so these pretenders walk abroad, staff in hand, and, because they are neither pale nor thin, the stick is to be the lying voucher for their indisposition." Abbots do not escape; the man never lived who could say more truly with St. Paul, "I respect no man's person;" so from the sheep he turns to the shepherds, asks how the men who rule in monasteries can tolerate the practices which he denounces, and thus sharply supplies the reason :

"It is the weakness of human nature not to be indignant with others on account of faults in which we indulge ourselves. I will—I must speak; I may be charged with presumption, but what I say is truth. How is the light become dim! How has the salt lost its savour! The men, whose life ought to mark out the way of life to us, have turned proud, and so become blind leaders of the blind. What sort of humility is it when a single abbot goes abroad with so much of pomp, surrounded by equipages and dressed-up

lacqueys enough to serve for two bishops? I myself have seen an abbot travelling with sixty horses in his train. Truly you would say of men thus attended, if you saw them passing, that they were governors of castles or provinces, instead of spiritual rulers and fathers of convents."

The concluding section of this remarkable document, precious alike for its historical value, and for the insight it gives us into the mind of the man whom a hundred monasteries owned as their founder, has reference to the practice of heaping wealth on chapels, altars, and oratories, in the shape of sculptured ornaments, costly paintings, and handsome furniture. The monk, some would say, is turned Puritan, when he takes exception to the "immense height, the immoderate length, and the superfluous width" of sacred buildings, and complains that the finery which dazzles the eye, besides having a Jewish look, distracts the worshipper, and makes his prayers less fruitful. Yet he distinguishes between the bishop and the abbot, between the rude flock who need material helps to stir them to devotion, and the dwellers in cloisters who have renounced the world's treasures for a better portion, and *count as dung, that they may win Christ*, whatever charms the senses, or ministers to mere animal enjoyment. Besides, he says, in language with which the Reformation has made us familiar, is not covetousness at the bottom of all this expenditure—*covetousness which is idolatry*? Money is lavished that the offerings may grow. The sight of these vanities, which are a wonder

for their costliness, excites men not to devotion, but to be generous givers in their turn. Relics are enshrined in gold, and some image of a Saint is displayed decked out in gaudy colours; and men first run and kiss it, and then are invited to present their offering. "And for what is all this designed, think you? To make penitents more contrite, or to make gazers more liberal? O! vanity of vanities! and madness as well as vanity! The Church has splendour in her walls, and want in her members. Her stones are covered over with gold, and her children are naked. The poor are robbed for the rich, and all to feed the lusting eye."

These extracts belong to a later date, but the subject of them makes them appropriate to this part of our narrative. It is well to have before us at once the good and the evil of a subject so much canvassed as the monastic life. In Bernard—himself so pure and devout, intent on great objects, and living apart from the world that he might live more entirely to God—we see the best that the system could produce; in his own truth-telling record, which must be taken for veritable history, we see how inevitably evils crept in, and scandals became rife, when strictness had made an order famous, and their fame attracted wealth. One fruit of the *Apology* is worth recording. Suger, Abbot of St. Denis, read it, and became a changed man from that hour. He was a favourite minister of Louis VI., and having wealth and honours heaped upon him by his sovereign, kept something like princely'

state in his monastery. It was a place of resort for soldiers, for the ladies of the Court, for men of business, and men of pleasure. “Les joyeux moines de St. Denis,” to quote the words of the Roman Catholic biographer, “s’étaient depuis longtemps accoutumés à ce genre de vie, et n’avaient conservés de leur ancienne vocation que les bienséances et les formes extérieures.” But now all was changed; the luxurious abbot was put to shame; his house was reformed; monks who had lived at ease were put under rigid discipline; the house of mirth became a house of prayer. There is a long and interesting letter among the *four hundred and forty-seven* contained in Bernard’s published works, in which he gives vent to his joyous feelings on hearing the news of this happy change. “All good men rejoice, and bless God,” he says, “for the work is His, not ours. You have done well, brother, in that you have set yourself at once to impart to others the good hope which is Heaven’s gift to yourself. As a brave captain, who sees his soldiers routed and falling, though he might escape himself, will turn, and run from rank to rank, confronting the enemy where he is strongest, arresting the fugitives, dealing out to enemies the killing stroke, and to friends the cheering word, till the frightened host take heart again and stand, and put the pursuers to flight,—so hast thou done, and succeeded beyond thy hopes. Thou must bear with my praises, for I glory only in the Lord. I cannot call evil good, but am accustomed to de-

nounce the evil sharply when I see it; and now, not as a flatterer, but as one who speaks in charity, and rejoices in the truth, I proclaim aloud, that the world and the Church may know it, the good which God has wrought." Such is the substance of this outpouring of honest zeal; with such words of encouragement, infusing strength and hope, did the man of God give a brother's welcome to those who were resolved, like himself, to lift up the standard of reformation.

When Bernard went to be consecrated abbot by the Bishop of Châlons, his strength was so reduced by bodily mortifications, that he looked more like a feeble old man than one some years short of thirty. But the Ecclesiastical Superior soon recognised the fervent and noble spirit which dwelt within that emaciated frame, and commanded the youthful abbot to spare himself, assuming the tone of a father, and requiring him to abstain from all public business for a whole year, while measures were taken to restore his health. Obedience was the law of Bernard's life; no yoke was spurned which it seemed right for him to carry; so a little hut was built for him outside the convent walls, and to ensure his having the wholesome and generous diet which he needed, a doctor was hired for an attendant, and the holy man was given into his charge. But the man was either a madman, or else a wretched quack without skill or conscience, and used his patient miserably ill. William of Thierry gives a lively account of his first visit to Clairvaux,

from which we learn how completely the good bishop's scheme had failed, so far as bodily treatment was concerned, and how content the youthful abbot was to be cared for or neglected, while his mind was left free for the exercises in which he found unfailing delight. Bernard was lodged in a poor, mean place, like those which were built by the side of high roads for lepers ; yet to the narrator, such was the greeting he received, and such the discourse with which he was entertained, that it seemed more like a royal chamber, and he approached it, as he tells us, with feelings of reverence akin to those with which men draw near to the altar of God. "My visit," he adds, "was prolonged to some days, and while it lasted I seemed almost to see new heavens, and a new earth. I thought I would gladly have shared his poverty, and dwelt for ever by his side." Truly, some better company was needed than that of the good man's medical guardian, as appears from the following pitiable story :—

"When the saint had given me a joyful welcome, and I inquired what he was doing, and how he fared, he answered with one of his gracious smiles, 'Excellently well ; God has requited me justly ; for reasonable men used to obey me, and now I have to obey a brute who seems not to have the gift of reason.' He referred to a clownish, empty-headed man, who had boasted that he would restore the saint to health, while he was really an ignorant pretender ; yet his orders, according to the injunctions of bishop, abbots, and monks, were to be implicitly obeyed. When meal-time came, we expected, of course, that one so weakly, and whose treatment had been

carefully provided for, would have a diet suited to his case ; instead of that, when we saw meat put before him, by the doctor's express orders, such as a man in his senses would hardly touch even when suffering from the pains of hunger, we looked on in utter consternation, and, bound as we were by the rule of silence during meals, could hardly refrain from assailing the wretch as a sacrilegious homicide. The injured man, however, took what was given him with an air of indifference, and was satisfied with all that came. In fact, his sense of taste was well nigh gone, and he could hardly distinguish one sort of food from another."

We must give one more extract from this narrative—the abbot's story about what he saw and heard at Clairvaux, and the talk that he had with Bernard in his mean dwelling, having an authentic character about it which makes it better worth hearing than most that is told us about wonder-working saints. Immediately after the picture of the sorry meal, and the mad doctor, with the indignant lookers-on, we have the following piece of glowing description :—

"Thus the man of God dwelt in his solitary home ; but God and the holy Angels were with him, as appeared by many certain proofs. One night, after he had been praying in a transport of unusual fervour, he had just fallen asleep, when he heard voices as of a great company passing by. On waking up, he heard the voices more distinctly, on which he left his cell, and followed the sound. A little way off there was a piece of ground overrun with thorns, then a thicket of bramble-bushes, though now it has quite another aspect. There, for some time, two rows of singers stood over against each other, as for alternate chanting, and the holy man listened with ravished ears. A wondrous vision, truly, of which the meaning was hidden from him till years afterwards,

when the monastery was removed, and the oratory was placed on the very spot where he had heard the voices."

Coming in the midst of a narrative, of which the former and the latter portions are taken up with the personal interview between the two friends, we must infer that this story was told by Bernard himself to his visitor; in which case he had evidently confounded a dream of the night with a waking reality,—no wonder, considering how the poor man was dieted, and that the fervent soul had a bent and feeble tabernacle to dwell in. Or what was told as a dream, the narrator, in after days, from imperfect memory, yet in perfectly good faith, may have turned into a vision of Angels, prophetic of future changes; for to mediæval chroniclers dreams and visions were alike, and they reckoned surely on incidents of that sort to garnish their story, when some man of high repute for sanctity was the subject.

In spite of coarse diet and bad treatment, Bernard recovered strength enough to resume his duties, and the few years which followed were perhaps the happiest of his life. The fame of his virtues drew devotees in crowds to Clairvaux, and new abbots went forth from its walls, with their little company of emigrants, to found new monasteries. The bereaved, the suffering, the burdened in conscience, flocked to him, each with their tale of sorrow, and got wise counsel or loving sympathy. When his strength permitted, preaching excursions were frequent; and among the men who have had



crowds hanging on their lips, or who have reached individual consciences by earnest, impassioned eloquence,—setting forth God's claims and expounding His law of righteousness, mingling, too, with exhortations to holy living the topics of consolation and encouragement which are drawn from the Redeemer's Cross and Passion,—none, perhaps, since the days of the Apostles, have been so powerful and successful. To his other tasks was added frequent correspondence with nobles and rulers in France, and Italy, and Germany ; while Chapters of the Cistercian Order could hardly dispense with his attendance ; and if men like-minded with himself projected some improvement in conventual rule, or desired to check some spreading corruption, the Abbot of Clairvaux was the first to be appealed to for advice and assistance. “In journeyings often, in watchings often, in fastings often,” “in labours *more abundant*,” thus he lived and toiled during the period we speak of, when his fervent piety, and intense energy, and heroic courage, had given him an European reputation, and laymen and ecclesiastics brought their doubts and their feuds to him, as a skilful casuist, and a wise and upright judge.

The year 1127 brought Bernard into collision with a powerful enemy, and showed that he could stand up against kings and popes, besides exhorting abbots and bishops to be faithful to their duties. The Bishop of Paris had been despoiled of his temporalities by a decree of the royal court, and

the king upheld his judges. The merits of the quarrel, Sismondi says, are not known with any certainty ; the Church historians tell us that Louis VI. was angry with the bishop, who had been one of his favoured companions, for leaving the Court, and giving his undivided attention to the care of his diocese ; and that, in consequence, he lent a ready ear to malicious accusations brought by unworthy priests, who loved not the stricter rule to which they were subjected. Any how, the bishop and his metropolitan, who took his part, laid the king under an interdict, took refuge at Citeaux, and appealed to the Chapter for help against the strong hand of power. They decided, naturally, that the churchmen were in the right ; and it was resolved to draw up a memorial to the king, to be signed by all the abbots of the order. Bernard, who feared the face of no living man, held the pen and began as follows :—"The King of Heaven and Earth has endowed you with an earthly kingdom, to which He will add a heavenly crown, if wisely and justly you shall discharge the trust reposed in you. This, Sire, is our wish and our prayer on your behalf—namely, that you may rule faithfully here, and have eternal happiness for your portion on high. But why do what you can to make our prayers fruitless, when once, as you remember, in former days, you begged them with all humility ? With what hope of success can we lift up our hands to the Bridegroom of the Church, when grievously, wantonly, and daringly (as it seemeth to us), you

have oppressed His spouse." Then follows a hint about an appeal to the Pope, which shall be deferred, at any rate, till it is seen whether the king will do justice of his own accord.

The Pope, however, was as bad; for the next letter in the collection, the *forty-sixth*, is a grave remonstrance—almost a rebuke—addressed "To the Sovereign Pontiff, from Hugo of Pontigny and Bernard of Clairvaux, abbots of the Poor Brethren of Christ." We give it entire.

"Pitiable, indeed, is the case of the bishops—yea, rather of the whole Church; and we, its unworthy sons, must not throw a veil over the wrong. We tell what we have seen; for a cruel necessity has dragged us out of our cloisters to deal with matters of public import. Sad at heart were we when our eyes beheld it, and sad at heart are we now that we proclaim the fact; but, in very deed, while *Honorius* rules, the Church's *honour* has been seriously damaged. The king had ceased from his anger; the humility, or (rather, perhaps, we should say) the firmness and courage of the bishops, had gained the victory, when the highest authority—that of the Supreme Pontiff himself—came to overrule his decision, and (sad to tell) the courageous ones are beaten down, and the proud man is set up again. We are assured, indeed, that you have been imposed upon by wicked lies, else you would never have taken off an interdict for which both justice and necessity pleaded. But we marvel how it came to pass that one side only was heard, and judgment given against the absent party. This proceeding, of course, we do not blame in the spirit of rashness and presumption; but, with the dutifulness of sons appealing to a father, we venture to suggest that such a result maketh the wicked to lift himself up proudly, and mightily aggrieveth the poor. How long you should endure the one, and to what extent the other should have your sympathy, it doth not become us to say; we prescribe nothing,

most gracious father ; we do but ask you to take counsel with your own loving compassion."

Thus abbots once wrote to popes. No such documents are published now-a-days. Much more respectful and complimentary is all that passes between the superior clergy and the head of the Romish Church, since the supremacy became a disputed dogma.

The letters are authentic history. The monkish chronicler adds that, when King Louis would not yield to persuasion, Bernard had recourse to threats : — "*You have offended Him whom kings cannot withstand, and who takes away the spirit of princes. Beware, for your son Philip, if you persist, will pay the penalty of your obstinacy. I saw in a dream, last night, your second son, Louis, coming in procession with you to the bishop of your kingdom. Then understood I that you came to have him anointed as your successor, in the place of his elder brother, and knew that the heir of your throne was dead.*" At these words, the king's heart yearned over his first-born, and he promised to satisfy the bishops ; but he was led away by evil counsels, and his promise never came to fulfilment ; so, no long time afterwards, his son came to an untimely end, and the bereaved parent, and all France with him, bewailed the fate of the royal youth with many tears." We hope that Bernard never prophesied so rashly. The event, doubtless, suggested the legend, which is a sample of numbers of a like kind in mediæval story ; but, some two years afterwards,

as the prince was riding through the streets of Paris, he was thrown from his horse, and survived the effects of a terrible blow only a few hours,—an escaped pig being the author of the mischief.

Many things concurred to break in upon the repose which Bernard coveted. Again and again, some “cruel necessity” arose, and, in spite of himself, he was “dragged from the cloister” to a public stage. We find him, in the year 1127, summoned by the Cardinal Legate to the Council of Troyes, after he had vainly solicited a release, on the score of recent sickness, and felt infirmity. “Why am I a monk,” he asks, “if my services cannot be dispensed with on occasions like these? I long to dwell in the secret place of the Most High; and then I am told that bishops need my presence to settle weighty affairs. Go I must, if you command it; but spare me, if you may.” So he went, and was the busiest man in the council. Among other things, the Knights Templars wanted a rule for their order, and Bernard was commissioned to draw it up. His imagination kindled at the thought of soldiers binding themselves by vows of obedience and chastity, living a regulated life in the camp, and drawing the sword only at the Church’s bidding, when the Holy Sepulchre was attacked, or Christian pilgrims were oppressed by the cruel Mussulman. So he prescribed a mode of life answerable to his own high hopes, reflecting much of the strictness of the cloister, and sent forth these new champions of Christendom, almost like armed priests, to fight the

battles of the Lord. Not content with prescribing the duties of the new order, he went on to vaunt their praises; for, in a later year, he addressed a letter of exhortation to the master, in which the discipline and manners of these "soldiers of Christ" are described in the most glowing language. Doubtless, they were so reported to the eloquent writer. Possibly, for a little while, men of war, in an age of licence, lived after that fashion; but, if history has not strangely belied the order, before the century closed the Templars had gained an evil reputation, which makes the picture of the saintly abbot read like bitter mockery: "In diet and in clothing," he writes, "everything superfluous is rejected; bare necessities are provided; they never sit idle, and never roam abroad for curiosity; rarely, indeed, are they free from military duties; but when it so chances, they refuse to eat the bread of idleness, and occupy themselves in repairing their torn garments or broken arms, or do whatever is commanded by the master, for public convenience. Rank has no privileges among them; the best man is counted the noblest. All that is unbecoming in speech, or frivolous in conduct, is forbidden, even to immoderate laughter. Chess and dice are an abomination to them; hunting and hawking are alike distasteful." Brian de Bois Guilbert, we remember, was a Templar; and the order was yet young when King Richard returned from captivity to confront his guilty brother; but we fear that the picture of its morals, which is contained in the pages of

"Ivanhoe," was nearer the truth in that age than this high-flown description. Bernard wrote as his sanguine temper led him to believe. A professed soldier of Christ was to him a man full-armed in the Christian panoply. So in this very treatise he wrote strange things about the Templars who died in battle. "Other men," he says, "who fight the world's battles, are in evil case; there is danger lest they should destroy their own souls by slaying the enemy, or, being conquered and slain, should be destroyed themselves, both body and soul. Not so the man who fights for Christ; the cause sanctifies the deed; he is safe when he kills—safer when he dies; the last is his own gain—the first, his Master's."

Between the commands of those whom he was glad to obey, and the envy of some whom he could not help displeasing, the Abbot of Clairvaux sometimes was strangely beset. He went to Troyes, we have seen, sorely against his will, for "his cloister," he used to say, "was his Paradise;" "he was like an unfledged bird, for ever out of his nest, exposed to wind and storm." Then came complaints of his being over-busy when there, accusations at Rome from hostile bishops, and, lastly, a rebuke from the Pope himself, conveyed through his chancellor, in a contemptuous strain like this:—"The Church has its several ranks and orders, and, for peace sake, each must keep its place; there is nothing but confusion when the boundary-lines are passed; frogs must not come out of their marshes and trouble

pope and cardinals with their croaking noise." "Be it so," replied Bernard, with his accustomed humility; "let it be decreed that frogs shall abide in their caves and marshes. Let them not be heard in council chambers, or intrude into palaces. I was there, I allow; but men called and dragged me thither. I will offend no more. I am resolved that I will not stir from my monastery, saving only when the interest of the Order shall require it, or I shall be commanded thereunto by the legate of the Holy See, or the bishop to whom I owe obedience."

Little did Bernard think, when that resolution was recorded, how large a portion of his remaining years would be spent amid the distractions of public life. With the death of Pope Honorius II., in the year 1130, commenced the famous Schism, which lasted for several years; and in the tumult which ensued Bernard's little bark was forcibly driven out of its peaceful haven into a sea of storms. Rome had been divided into two factions, each on the look-out for a vacancy. One was headed by the Frangipani family, who had carried the preceding election; another was in the interest of a family represented by Cardinal Pietro Leoni, whose rich grandfather, a converted Jew, had had money transactions with the Court, and had laid former popes under special obligations. An agreement had been entered into beforehand to the effect that all should be done according to canonical rule, the cardinals being duly assembled, after notice, in the Church of St. Mark, and there abiding till they



came to a formal decision. But, alas! for solemn compacts in the Holy City, when rivals were watching and suspecting each other, and the allegiance of Christendom was the prize! Honorius died at night, and the one party—Frangipani's—determined to steal a march upon the enemy. So, before morning, *sixteen* cardinals met, by stealth, and nominated their favourite, who became known as Innocent II. Afterwards *thirty* dissentient cardinals met at St. Mark's, and having pronounced the former election invalid, advanced Pietro Leoni to the papal chair. He assumed the title of Anaclet II., and then came wars and tumults at Rome, and embassies to princes setting forth the claims of the rival parties, and the pleadings and counter-pleadings among churchmen which marked every fresh suit, when Christendom was turned into an ecclesiastical court, and the question was, Who shall be Christ's vicegerent upon earth? At Rome Anaclet was the favourite, and Innocent fled to France to urge his claims on Louis VI. The king referred the decision to his bishops, and a Council was assembled at Etampes. As a matter of course Bernard was summoned to take part in its deliberations; but little could he, the "fluttering dove," thus exposed to "wind and storm," have anticipated the result at which they speedily arrived; for, with one consent, the assembly agreed to let Bernard examine the pretensions of the two claimants, and to abide by his choice.

Here, then, was a sight for reasonable men to

wonder at. If the Church of Christ, scattered through all lands, was to have a visible head, and it had not pleased God to designate by miracle the one man on whom the spirit of wisdom was to be poured without measure,—if the election at Rome was anything better than a blasphemous mockery, and the cardinals really had authority to lift one of their number to so high a dignity,—then evidence conclusive and unimpeachable was wanted that all was done by rule, that faction had not overborne the court to which awful duties were intrusted, and especially that guile and fraud had not tainted the proceedings in which all Christendom had such a stake. The investigation, all must allow, was a difficult one to be carried on at a distance from the scene of action. Uncertain rumours would be sure to anticipate authentic testimony. Impartial witnesses would be hard to find. A prompt decision was expedient ; but a careful, well-weighed decision, with all Europe waiting for an answer, was more important still. Bernard seems never to have hesitated. He presently declared for Innocent, and then pleaded the cause of the man whom he had chosen with an impassioned earnestness which carried with him bishops, and kings, and nobles. In a matter of such momentous consequence, we want something like a judicial sentence, with the facts and arguments plainly set forth. But his letters, in which the matter is discussed, are far from being specimens of calm reasoning leading to logical conclusions ; and when he assigns reasons,

there is a strange jumble of matters partly relevant, partly irrelevant, and partly questionable. To a hesitating Archbishop of Tours, he writes that Innocent's cause rested on three distinct grounds, which commanded universal assent; that he was "elected by the better party, approved by the larger number, and (what was more important still) had the advantage in respect of character." At this rate the College of Cardinals had to be sifted and tried before an election was valid. If the number of assents outside the college was to carry the day, then a poll should be taken in the principal towns of Europe to ensure certainty. Or, if the best man was to be pope, alas for the validity of past elections, and Bernard himself ought now to have been chosen by acclamation. Writing to another person of influence, he advances a step further, and says that the Church has done right in acknowledging the candidate who "was more highly esteemed in the Church, and whose election was the more valid, as the cardinals by whom the choice had been made were *more in number*, and better men than the others." Impartial history tells another tale as to the majority; doubtless, partisans had so reported the matter to Bernard; but then what need to bring in the subsidiary aid of reputation, as it was no new thing for a pope to be elected by bad cardinals, while Christendom looked quietly on, and accepted the ruler who was proclaimed at Rome? Writing a third letter to the refractory Bishop of Aquitaine, he lays down the law as to

invalid, or irregular elections, in a manner which put the Church completely at the mercy of a little party of factious intriguers. "The second election," he says, "was no election at all, but a mere factious movement. They may call it an election, if they will; but they lie impudently in doing so. For the Church has given judgment to this effect—that there can be no second election after the first; and although it should chance that some irregularity had crept in, as the enemies of unity pretend in this case, yet another election ought not to be ventured upon unless the first has been calmly deliberated upon, and annulled by a formal decision."

Having thus decided, Bernard never faltered or looked back. It became with him as an article of faith that Innocent was Pope; while his opponent is "Antichrist,"—"the beast in the Apocalypse who speaketh blasphemies, and wars with the saints,"—"the man of sin who has invaded the holy place with fire and sword." Foul names, like these, were no new thing in papal quarrels; and Bernard's eloquent railing would not have carried Europe with him if he had not already won its veneration by a purity of life, and an intensity of zeal for religious objects which contrasted nobly with the selfishness and ambition of the higher clergy. France was already gained, and her king had done homage to the successor of St. Peter with his crowned head in the dust. Henry I. of England was in Normandy, and remained for some time undecided. So

Bernard undertook a long journey to gain another royal convert ; but the son of the conqueror came of a stubborn race, and had been plied already by some of Anaclet's partisans among his bishops. For a time, therefore, the arguments which had prevailed elsewhere fell powerless on the King's ears. At last Bernard tried a fresh weapon, and succeeded. "Thou fearest to sin against God," he said, "by making a wrong choice. Settle with thyself how thou wilt answer for thy other sins ; leave this with me ; the sin, if there be one, shall be upon my head." Too bold a saying for a mortal man ! But the King, instead of finding fault with its presumption, accepted Bernard's sponsorship, and yielded to the prevailing current.

The Pope, before he left France, made a tour through many of the principal cities, and strengthened the ties of allegiance by visits and courtesies. Bernard was ever by his side—his principal adviser and confidential friend. All public matters were first talked over with the Abbot of Clairvaux ; and when his opinion was gained, cardinals and others were consulted. At Liege, whither Innocent repaired to meet Lothair, Emperor of Germany, another triumph was in store for Bernard. Following the example of the kings of France and England, the Emperor recognized the validity of the first election, and greeted the Pope with those outward demonstrations of reverence which the Servant of Servants always gladly accepted from earthly potentates. Dismounting from his horse in

the open street, Lothair took Innocent's bridle-rein, walked humbly by his side, and, with a wand, cleared a passage for him through the crowd which thronged his path. Then came the parleying which was sure to bring old quarrels to remembrance between Pope and Emperor. "Lend me your armies to put down this unnatural rebellion, and enthrone me in my own city," was the request of Innocent. "Gladly," replied Lothair; "you shall have all you ask when you restore to me what was wrongfully yielded by my father in the matter of investitures." "In a moment," says Abbot Ernard, the author of one of several fragmentary Lives of Bernard, "the fair prospect was clouded over; the Romans turned pale with fear; they thought that they should fare worse in the hands of Lothair than with their enemies at home. What to do none could tell, until the holy Abbot" (of Clairvaux) "stood like a tower against the Emperor, and, freely exposing the wickedness of his demands, restrained him, partly by argument, and partly by the wonderful influence of his name and character." Doubtless, peace was restored, and danger averted, by Bernard's intervention. The Emperor did not press the disputed point; the old feud slept for a season; but he was in no hurry to lend his soldiers to one who denied him favours, and the Pope's return to Italy was deferred.

A visit paid by the Pope to Clairvaux was a partial acknowledgment of the immense debt due to its abbot. After being splendidly entertained

in the cities of France, the rude simplicity of all that he saw in the famous monastery must have been doubly striking. The greeting of the *poor of Christ* was not with shoutings and the noise of trumpets, as elsewhere, but with lowly chantings from men in tattered garments, bearing a cross of stone. The furniture was of the meanest ; the walls were bare. "Nothing was seen in the church," says the monkish writer, who glories in his tale, "that a Roman could envy." Above all, the grave and reverent demeanour of the monks excited the admiration of the strangers ; for, with the Pope in presence, every eye was bent upon the ground, and not a curious gazer was found among them all. The fare was that of common days ; no banquet to rival those of kings, but coarse bread, pulse, and garden herbs. A solitary fish, placed before the great man himself, was the single luxury allowed.

After a pleasant chapter, full of homely details like these, claiming our respect and sympathy, as showing how consistent and uniform was the home life of the man who had a personal influence beyond that of kings and emperors, it is curious, in these old records, to come upon the childish stories which are scattered through the gravest narratives. The very next paragraph runs thus :—"The devil envied the glory of the good monks, whose house was ennobled by the presence of so distinguished a guest ; so, while they were engaged in chanting, with a glad heart, in the presence of some of the

cardinals, he gave a horrible fright to some of the brethren. For one, who was more intent on the service than the rest, uttered some blasphemous words, saying, *Tell them, I am Christ*; and others fled in terror to the side of the Holy Father. He, turning to the others, said, *Pray, pray*, and then quietly took out of the chapel those who were most alarmed, and soothed and comforted them. Thus the enemy was foiled, and had his wicked device turned against himself. *And all was done so quietly, that some who were standing near never saw what had happened*; so that the Evil One was not only rebuked, but the men for whom the scandal was prepared remained in utter ignorance of it."

It was not till the year 1133, two years after the meeting at Liege, that the Emperor made good his promise, and marched with Innocent to Rome. There Lothair received his reward, being crowned in the Lateran Church by the Pope's hands. St. Peter's, with the strong castle of St. Angelo, and a considerable portion of the city, remained in the hands of the adverse party. Italy, too, was divided. Roger, Duke of Sicily, who coveted the title of King of Italy, and hoped to make good his claim, if a pope should bless and crown him, was a fierce and powerful partisan of Anaclet's, and the bishops of Lombardy, with the Archbishop of Milan at their head, always jealous of the supremacy of Rome, largely favoured him. Bernard was wanted again to convince, persuade, exhort, and threaten; again his beloved monastery was left,



and many months were divided between attendance on the Pope and anxious endeavours to reduce refractory churchmen to submission. At one time, a council was talked of to decide between the rival popes, and restore peace to the Church; but Bernard answered that "God had decided already; the marvellous consent of princes and their subjects, of priests and laymen, was nothing less than a sign from Heaven. Who should persuade such a mighty host to consent to a rehearing? Or if the thing were attempted, where should a place be found to hold them? Bright as the noon-day, God's judgment had shone forth; but to the blind, light itself was darkness." Nevertheless, the people of Milan doubted and parleyed; they did not intend rebellion; they would give *all due reverence* to the Pope, but nothing more. "*All due reverence*" was the answer; "then nothing will be withheld; for all power over all Churches in the world is given, by special grant, to the Apostolic See. *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.* The Pope can institute new bishoprics, where none have ever been; can put down one and lift up another at discretion; can make bishops into archbishops, and degrade archbishops into bishops, where needful; can summon all ecclesiastical persons whatever from the ends of the earth and force them into his presence: and that, not once or twice, but as often as he shall deem it expedient." Bernard's personal presence did more, than letters like these, which gave to the popedom

all of authority that Hildebrand had claimed in the preceding century ; and his visit to the Milanese was like a royal progress, or a conqueror's march of triumph. Ernald revels in his description of the crowds who flocked out to meet the saint, nobles on horseback, substantial citizens and men of meaner condition on foot, covering the road for miles together, the foremost stooping to kiss his feet, while others plucked hairs from his garments, to serve for charms against disease. The devil, he goes on to say, had raged fearfully while the Archbishop had favoured the intrusive Pope ; many persons were tormented by him, and none could cast out the evil spirits because there was a curse upon the city ; but now with returning loyalty had come deliverance from the enemy ; for he fled before the prayers of the man of God, and occasional resistance did but make the triumph that ensued more glorious.

Certainly, by weight of words, or by force, of character, the refractory city was won, and the hearts of rulers and people were bowed to submission, as the heart of one man. These were the real wonders of his life—wonders which seem to be proved beyond dispute ; but the story, as told by his fond admirers of that age or the next, is spoiled by a large admixture of foolish legends, and incredible miracles. Of these there is a plentiful supply in the work from which we quote, the saint being the hero of a score of fights, of which the tale is diversified, but the issue always the same ;

the strong man armed is expelled by one yet stronger, and the torments which have been endured by some unhappy victim for months or years cease at the prophet's bidding. Gladly would the Milanese have retained among them the man whom all delighted to honour. "Remain with us and be our archbishop," was the prayer of magistrates, and clergy, and people; but high places in the Church were as little coveted by him as the world's prizes and honours. When his peacemaker's work was done, he was presently at Innocent's side, immersed in business, animating doubtful friends, warning dissentients that the cause he espoused was the cause of God,—himself the centre and spring of every movement that related to the great quarrel, or to the Church's internal government.

Meanwhile, Clairvaux was not forgotten. The stir and bustle of public life, with all that had been given him in the way of homage and deference wherever he went, had not weaned his heart from his home in the *Bright Valley*. Its peaceful shades,—its solemn services,—its works of piety and charity,—were all in his memory, and he longed to be among his monks again, as in the tranquil days before his name had sounded throughout Europe. Very touching are the words in which he sometimes pours forth his fervent love, and his deep sorrow, while the separation lasts, praying them to lighten the pains of absence by letting him hear a good report of their humility and charity, their diligence in devout reading, and watchfulness

in prayer. We will give a specimen of his letters of counsel and sympathy :

“Judge by your own feelings what my sufferings are. If my continued absence is painful to you, be sure that it pains me yet more. For while you miss but a solitary individual, and I am parted from the whole brotherhood, my loss and trouble must be the greater. Besides, I am sore pressed, not only because I am compelled to live for a time apart from you, whom I love so dearly that I should think a kingdom a poor bribe in exchange for your society and fellowship, but for another reason ; I am compelled to be constantly occupied with matters destructive to the repose which is so dear to me, and which agree but little with my plan of life. Remember this, and then blame not my long delay, which is forced upon me by the Church’s necessities, but rather give me your loving sympathy. Much longer, I trust our separation shall not last ; while it lasts, pray with me that it may turn to profit. Meanwhile let our losses be counted for gains, since they are for the cause of God, who, indeed, being All-Bountiful as well as Almighty, can easily requite them, not only to the full, but with a large increase. Till I come, serve the Lord with fear, that, when your enemies are all vanquished, you may serve Him without fear. Serve Him in hope, for He is faithful who hath promised. Serve Him as in faithfulness you should do, remembering that He may well claim our lives who for us laid down His own. Serve Him in love ; for love, that is genuine, *casteth out fear*, takes no account of labours, disclaims all merit, asks for no reward, and yet puts more of life into our services than aught else that stirs us to action. Fear is not so cogent ; hope of reward is less animating ; Justice and Reason do not constrain us so effectually. May this love ever draw us to you, as a bond that cannot be broken ; may it bring us to your remembrance at all times, and specially when you pray, brethren dearly beloved, and longed for.”

The time of release came at last, and liberated captive never gave it a heartier welcome. As

Bernard recrossed the Alps, his fame preceded him, and shepherds left their flocks to cast themselves at his feet, or called to him from the rocks, as he passed beneath them, to entreat his blessing. His monks met him at some distance from Clairvaux, and embraced him with tears of joy. Better, even, than the sight of his children was the good order in which he found the convent; and the brief exhortation, which he addressed to them in the chapel, before he slept, was mingled with fervent thanksgivings for this great gift, giving God the glory, though, under God, so much was due to his strict rule, and powerful example. New toils and anxieties awaited him; for the monastery overflowed, and a hundred recruits came but recently to pass their novitiate. Where he had stopped, in the course of his extensive journeyings, he had preached; and where he preached, he commonly kindled in some breast a desire to go where he went, and to dwell where he dwelt. So men came from the banks of the Rhine, and asked for admittance. "We have no money," he answered, when his monks pressed him to build a larger house on a neighbouring site; "we shall be like the man who begins to build a tower without counting the cost." "Nay," was the reply; "but else we must repel those whom God sendeth to us, and hinder His work." So the foundations were laid; the walls rose apace; money was supplied from many quarters, and a second house was reared, not more splendid, but larger and loftier than the first.

Bernard's accustomed duties were resumed with his characteristic zeal and ardour. A green arbour in the most retired part of the valley was his favourite place of resort (while his new home was being built), and there he spent as much time as could be spared from active duties, in meditation and prayer. A daily sermon to his monks was the fruit of his solitary hours ; and he took for his textbook the *Song of Solomon*. Chaste ears, he told them, were needed by those who would understand it ; the subject was not the love of human espousals, but a *soul athirst for God*—the “sweet colloquy” being intended to portray the overflowing compassion of the Heavenly Bridegroom, and the kindling of devout affections in the Church. With this theme in hand, at once so congenial and so fruitful, he discourses on God and man, Angels and devils, the Church's danger from within and without, in a style singularly discursive, often fanciful, but always glowing with earnestness and piety. The duties of rulers and pastors ; the errors of heretics ; the courage of martyrs ; the graces which should adorn the faithful, and the temptations which beset them ; the beauty of the lowly virtues, with the praises of a life of contemplative seclusion ;—all these topics are discussed, and many others ; while scraps from his own history, and the lives of some whom he had known as friends, furnish lively illustrations of his theme. We give a specimen from his exposition of the text, *Thy Name is as ointment poured forth* :—

“Is any of you oppressed with sorrow ? Let the Name of

Jesus sink into his heart, and be breathed forth from his lips, and lo ! the light will dawn, the clouds will flee away, and all become bright and fair. Does any fall into sin, and then think of rushing despairingly on death ? If he calls on that Name which is Life, will he not straightway begin to live again ? Who can keep the saving Name full in view, and retain his hard heart, his cowardice or slothfulness, or a bitter and angry spirit ? If the fountain of our tears be dried up, will it not flow forth in a fuller, sweeter stream, when we invoke the sacred Name ? Who cannot tell of fears presently dispelled, and confidence restored, when, trembling with alarm, he has taken refuge in that Name of power ? Who ever was tossed on the waves of doubt and perplexity, and did not find the star of hope shine out when that glorious Name was uttered ? Who, on hearing the Name of the Deliverer, has not grown brave again, after his faith had almost failed ? All these things are the ailments and diseases of the soul ; and that Name is the one remedy. Nothing so effectually puts a rein on passion, or keeps down the swellings of pride, or heals the wounds of jealousy ; it checks inordinate luxury, extinguishes the flames of lust, tempers the thirst of avarice, and turns men from the love of all that is unseemly and base. For, verily, when I name Jesus, the sharer of my humanity, I have before me One who was *meek and gentle in heart*, self-controlled and pure in act and thought, full of compassion and benignity, conspicuous for virtuous and holy deeds in every form,—yet the mighty God is also present with me, to heal me by the beauty of His example, and put His own strength within me.”

The sermon from which this extract is taken, the *fifteenth* of the series, has the following title :—  
“ *How the Name of Jesus is as healing medicine for faithful Christians in all times of trouble.*”  
There are *eighty-six* all together, and each has a descriptive heading. We give a few of them, show<sup>d</sup>

ing how thoroughly practical was Bernard's home-teaching, and how the book, which some Divines might avoid as not suited for exposition, and others might turn into high-flown rhapsodies about the Spouse and her Divine Lord, became in his hands the source of wise counsel respecting the Christian life and temper. Thus they run:—" *Against the odious fault of detraction; showing, too, in what moral uprightness mainly consists;*" " *About the horses of Pharaoh, who stand for the Tempter and his chief captains, namely, Malice, Luxury, and Coretousness;*" " *Touching Humility of two kinds, that which grows up when the Truth is apprehended, and that which is kindled by Charity;*" " *About adapting reproofs to the temper of offenders; light censure being for the lowly-minded, while hard and obstinate offenders should be sharply rebuked;*" " *Shereth how offences are like walls standing between God and the sinner.*" More than once the course was interrupted by a long absence at the call of public duty; but from grave cares and hot disputes elsewhere he came back jaded and wearied to his peaceful studies, and resumed his task in the chapel of Clairvaux, bringing forth, day by day, some fresh portion of the *Song of Songs*.

The schism, however, was not closed. Innocent was at Pisa; Roger gathered fresh strength, and needed a stronger arm to repel him than any of the Pope's Italian allies. In his retreat, Bernard heard the rumbling of the distant storm, and, happily busy as he was among his monks,—desiring



for himself no pleasure or occupation beyond those which belonged to his sacred office,—he still could not refrain from putting the war-trumpet to his lips. “*It does not become me,*” he says, writing to the Emperor, “*to call men to battle*; but I do not scruple to say that the Church’s champion is bound to protect the Church from the rage of schismatics; and it equally belongs to Cæsar to vindicate his own crown from the Sicilian usurper.” Lothair was roused, and again crossed the Alps with a larger army than before. At such a crisis, Innocent could not dispense with the services of Bernard; so once more the paternal farewell was given, the toilsome journey undertaken, and for many weary months he was detained among fighting soldiers, or intriguing churchmen embarked in a common cause with himself; while few among them were animated by the same generous motives, or aimed with such unselfish zeal at the re-establishment of peace.

The Emperor’s troops were too strong for resistance, and Innocent found himself once more in the Holy City. There the eloquence of Bernard was as effectual to win the refractory Romans to his cause as the German sword had been to clear the way for his coming. Then came the death of Lothair, like a thunder-clap, in the midst of successes; and Bernard, when other men were quailing and dispirited, sought the camp of the King of Sicily, to counsel submission and peace. He failed; and then the unyielding prince fought a hard battle;

and met with a terrible defeat. Either to gain time, while his armies were recruited, or, as the Church historians say, from a qualm of conscience, because he was "not destitute of religious faith," Roger, at this point, gave out that he should like to be present at a discussion between learned persons as to the merits of the rival popes and the validity of the two elections : a late resolve, certainly, after he had been battling for Anaclet during several years ; but to Bernard all eyes were turned as the advocate who could best maintain the cause of Innocent. To one Cardinal Pietro, of Pisa, was committed the task of presenting the claims of Anaclet in the fairest light, and the day of audience came. The cardinal, we are told, "made a pompous oration," endeavouring to prove the validity of the second election, "by an appeal to the canons, and historical precedents." Whether it was more conclusive than Bernard's argument, we have no means of determining ; but, assuredly, the counter-plea, as reported to us by favouring annalists, does not read very convincingly, when we remember what was the mixed question of law and fact which had to be determined. After a modest preface, in which Bernard acknowledged the learning and eloquence of his antagonist, saying, with characteristic modesty, that "no one could resist them, if they were employed to defend the right, still less one, like himself, fitter to till the ground than to meddle with such high matters ;" he went on to say that Anaclet had rent the robe of Jesus Christ—a foul deed

which pagans and Jews had left undone ; and the prince, who sat before them, had abetted him in his crimes ; therefore, speak he must. “ There is but *one faith*,” he said, “ *one Lord, one Baptism*. If we go back to the most remote antiquity, what do we find ? *One ark* in which eight persons were saved, while the world was drowned. The ark was the symbol of the Church ; but now, in our day, a new ark has been built, and because there are *two*, one of necessity must sink and perish. If Anaclet’s ark is of God, Innocent’s must be lost ; and then all the Churches of the East and West will be lost, too. Yes, France must perish, and Germany, and England, and Spain ; the most renowned kingdoms of the earth will sink into perdition, and the holy orders with them, including an infinite number of faithful servants of God, with bishops, abbots, and Christian princes,—all will be involved in one fatal shipwreck, Roger only excepted. Roger shall be saved, forsooth, and not another man besides. God forbid ! Religion shall not perish out of the universe. The ambitious Anaclet shall not have the kingdom of Heaven to himself,—that kingdom from which men of ambition are shut out.” Roger remained unconvinced. The cardinal, however, was won, though the prince was obstinate. He was struck dumb, we are told, by his rival’s eloquent appeal. A private conference completed his conversion ; and straightway he went to Rome, accompanied by Bernard, to make his submission to the Pope.

One more triumph remained for Bernard before he left Italy. Anaclet died in the beginning of the year 1138, and the cardinals of his party proceeded to a new election. But Europe was almost unanimous by this time; the number of the dissentients had dwindled down to insignificance; and among them were many who gladly caught at this opportunity of going over to the strongest side. *Victor* was the inappropriate title of the new aspirant to papal honours; for in a few days he came as a humbled and defeated man to Bernard to beg his intercession with the Pope. Together they sought the presence of Innocent, now the undisputed lord of Christendom; and the schism of eight years' duration was terminated by the confession and pardon of the rival claimant. A messenger, with a letter from Bernard to the prior, carried the glad tidings to Clairvaux. "*I come*," he says; "no longer is it, *I will come*. Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me,—nothing less than Christ's triumph, and the Church's peace. The words have a gladsome sound; but the result is more transporting still. The man who does not exult in it must be strangely foolish, or strangely wicked."

The joy of Bernard's return was speedily damped by a great sorrow—the death of his best-loved brother, Gerard. Amid all that biography has recorded of the griefs of holy men, when, amid the tears which would have their course, they have rejoiced in the sure promises and ample consolations

of the Gospel, a more touching scene is not found than that in which we read of Bernard following the remains to the grave—the one tearless mourner, reading the appointed prayers with an unfaltering voice, giving dust to dust with his own hands; then mounting the pulpit to resume his exposition of the Song of Solomon, but turning aside to tell his monks what love, “passing the love of women,” had bound the two brothers fast together, till the full heart burst, and in a voice stifled with sobs, he exclaimed, “Forgive me, my children; or, rather, because you are my children, join your tears to those of your father.” We must give an extract or two before we pass on to matters of quite another kind:—

“You know well how reasonable my grief is, and how grievous is my loss; for you have been witnesses of his faithfulness as he walked with me in the way which I must tread alone henceforth. You can testify to his careful habits, his painstaking diligence, and his disposition of unfailing sweetness. Who was so necessary to me as he was? or who ever loved me so truly? I was weak in body, and he sustained me; often faint-hearted, and he encouraged me; of a slothful habit, and he stirred me to exertion; forgetful of many things, and he brought them to my remembrance. . . . Alas! who now shall be my adviser in times of grief and perplexity? Who shall bear the burden for me, or meet danger when it cometh? Did not Gerard’s eye survey my path? and did not his persuasive tongue save me from much talk of a worldly kind, and set me free for the silent contemplation which I longed for? For, humble as he was, and full of modesty, he thought that my leisure must needs yield more of profit than his own. . . . Thanks to you, then, my brother, for all the fruit of my studies, if they have proved

gainful to any ; for you were immersed in business while you set me at liberty to give myself to holy duties, or to employ myself to advantage in the instruction of my children. For why should I not stay contentedly within doors when I knew that you were busy without—you, who were not only my right hand, but the light of my eyes, my heart, and tongue. I had the abbot's place and title ; but the burden of care and labour was yours ; therefore, my spirit was at rest, and I could have free communion with my Lord, could preach more freely, and pray without distraction. Yes, I say again, *you* gave me all this ; my mind was calm, my rest welcome, my teaching more powerful ; prayer brought me richer fruit, my studies were less interrupted, my soul was more alive to God.

“ I grieve *over* thee, my beloved Gerard, but not *for* thee. It is I that must drink the cup of bitterness. I have not lost thee, God forbid ! May I but come where thou art, though I tarry for a while behind thee ! For, of a surety, thou art gone to that blessed company whom thou didst invite to join thee in thy song of praise, during the last night thou didst spend on earth, when exultingly thou didst break forth in the words of holy David, while thy friends looked on and wondered : *Praise ye the Lord from the heavens ; praise Him in the height.* Already, my brother, even at midnight, thy day had begun, and the darkness to thee was all light. I was sent for to see a dying man full of triumph. *O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?* And when I came, and heard him just finishing the Psalm, with an unfaltering voice, looking up to Heaven, he said, ‘ *O, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit ;* ’ and turning to me with a countenance that beamed with joy, he exclaimed, ‘ What condescension on God's part that He should deign to be the Father of the children of men ! What glory for men that they should be sons and heirs of God—*if children, then heirs !* ’ Such was his dying strain, and my grief, I confess, was well-nigh turned into a song of gladness, while I forgot my own misery, and thought only of his exceeding bliss.”

Large was the debt that Innocent owed to Bernard. That single voice had won for him kings and kingdoms. When Europe was divided, and the Pope in exile, none proclaimed so loudly that obedience to his decrees was the first of Christian duties. But the same man could speak, and almost arraign, in the Prophet's strain, when he saw disorders in the Church which ought to be repressed with a strong hand. He found wrong-doers, whom bishops had rebuked and punished, fleeing to Rome, making friends among the cardinals, and getting the sentence reversed. Thus gravely he remonstrates, writing to Innocent himself :—

“ Among those who rule their dioceses well there is universal complaining that justice is no longer to be had ; that the keys of the Church have lost their virtue, and that episcopal authority is utterly degraded ; for things have come to such a pass that bishops hardly dare to avenge the insulted honour of God, or to punish offences even within their own borders ; and men lay the blame on you, and on the Court of Rome. You undo what has been determined by them on just grounds, and you set up again what they have cast down. Men of unprincipled character, and of a turbulent spirit, both priests and laymen, it seems, run straight to you, and even expelled monks, and then come back in triumph, boasting of your protection. Shame, shame ! These abuses provoke the enemies of the Church to laughter, our friends are covered with insult, bishops are brought into contempt. And this is not the worst, for your dignity suffers in proportion as their just decisions are lightly regarded.”

Kings were not spared when humanity required him to speak out. “ Well was it for the age,” says

Neander, in recording the encounter between Bernard and Louis VII., "that, distinguished from the multitude, who were swayed only by their temporal hopes and fears, there were men who had spirit and strength to confront the mighty in the storm of their wrath;" and, truly, the courage displayed by the weak who stood up for the right, and the deference often paid them by the rulers of the earth when conscience seconded their message, make up some of the most instructive scenes in those days of wild licence and arbitrary rule. "God knoweth," says the plain-speaking abbot, "how I have loved you, and sought your honour; you know, too, sire, how anxiously I laboured for a whole year to give peace to your kingdom. Vain, I fear, have been my efforts; for all too quickly and too lightly have you foregone what was well resolved, and have rushed back to the evil counsels which so lately you professed to deplore. Surely it must be of the devil's prompting, who was a murderer from the beginning, that you are wasting a whole district with fire and sword, while the cries of the poor, and the groans of the slain, enter into the ears of Him who is the father of the fatherless, and the judge of the widow."

This spirited remonstrance arose out of a quarrel between the King of France and Count Theobald of Champagne, to whom Bernard was bound by the ties of friendship and gratitude. The story is a long one; but, as illustrating the manners and morals of the times, the leading events are worth



telling. Bernard's part in the transaction we shall find marked by culpable duplicity at one point ; and the faults, which threw a shade over his virtues, must not be concealed or excused. Louis VII., for private ends, wished to marry his wife's sister to a vassal whom he could trust, and chose one of his own relatives, the Count of Vermandois. But the count had a wife already, the sister of Count Theobald of Champagne. A divorce was wanted, and three compliant bishops were found to declare the previous marriage invalid. Theobald was a friend of Bernard's, and a munificent benefactor of Clairvaux ; both of them together denounced the scandal at Rome. Popes were jealous for their jurisdiction in the matter of divorces, and found suits from princes and nobles not a little gainful ;\* the offence, therefore, of marrying a second wife, without permission from head quarters, was punished with ex-

Sismondi tells the story at full length ; and in two sentences gives a just and forcible description of the iniquities which surrounded the Divorce Court in the Holy City :—

“ Il est vrai que les grands seigneurs, qui désiraient un divorce, pouvaient toujours trouver dans leur généalogie quelque lien de parenté avec leurs femmes, et quelque prétexte pour faire casser leur mariage. Une législation de scandales et de parjures encourageait tour à tour des révélations honteuses et des déclarations mensongères, dont la Cour de Rome se constituait juge ; et selon que les princes jouissaient ou non de sa faveur, tantôt elle déclarait nuls les mariages les plus légitimes, tantôt elle refusait obstinément les divorces les plus nécessaires.”—*Histoire des Français XIII.*, 390, 391.

communication, and the offender and his people were laid under an interdict. Louis grew angry at the treatment of his kinsman, and sent an army to waste Champagne. Theobald appealed to his vassals for support; but they did not love him, and, instead of coming to his rescue, they answered that his friends, the monks, might help him if they would. Thus deserted, he sued humbly to the king for peace; and it was granted on condition that he should obtain from Rome, for the Count of Vermandois, a release from excommunication, and the withdrawal of the interdict.

Through Bernard's influence the Count of Champagne made sure of getting this favour from Innocent; and Bernard's letter survives which carried the request to Rome—unimpeachable evidence, we must say, of bad faith, which contrasts strangely with his reputation for sanctity. "It is a time of tribulation and of anguish," he writes; "men die fast, and the poor are driven from their homes, and rich men are cast into prison till the very earth seems to quake for the burden that is laid upon it. Religion is despised, and faith and innocence are nowhere to be found. Your loyal son, and the Church's devoted champion, Count Theobald, has made certain terms with his enemies to prevent his lands being given over to desolation. He has bound himself by oath to procure the removal of the sentence of excommunication which your worthy legate pronounced against the author of all this mischief, the wicked tyrant, and his wicked para-

mour. This promise was made at the solicitation of wise and faithful men, who said that you could easily do this without damage to the Church, *since you could at any time repeal the sentence, and make it irrevocable; peace, they said, would thereby be restored, and the crafty ones caught in their own craftiness.*" Thus holy men sued to him who was lord over the consciences of Christendom! So completely were the first principles of morality forgotten, while men professed to have the thunderbolts of Heaven in their keeping!

The year 1140 brought Bernard to a new stage in his career, and exhibited him to the eyes of Europe as the champion of the Orthodox Faith against the dangerous subtleties and irreverent speculations of Abelard. The place occupied by this man in the history of the twelfth century is a curious phenomenon, and the details of his eventful life furnish a painful, but not uninteresting, commentary on the moral feeling, the ecclesiastical usages, and the intellectual development, of that particular era. Who was Abelard? *A monk*, to begin with,—to whom the cloister had been a place of study, rather than devotion, and who came forth, at an early age, an accomplished dialectician, furnished with all the learning of the Schools. He could challenge France and the neighbouring kingdoms to the fence, with arguments for swords, and had never met his master. He was a *disgraced monk*, who, admitted to the intimacy of a beautiful girl by a fondly confiding guardian, when he was

verging on middle life, made the school-room a place of seduction; and when the cruel revenge of her indignant relatives had published his offence to all the world, he neither professed himself a penitent, nor lost his reputation as a teacher. After a temporary seclusion in a monastery notorious for lax morals and discipline, where his proud and restless spirit led him to play the censor with small success, he opened a new school, and delivered lectures, to which students thronged from all quarters, men who wanted what he supplied.—subtle reasoning and brilliant eloquence on the deepest questions of Philosophy and Theology. With discussions of this sort, the keen-sighted, plain-speaking doctor mingled very startling declarations on the subject of priestly power, pouring contempt on penances and indulgences and absolutions, apart from repentance and faith and charity. Enemies were stirred up,—some who envied his growing reputation, and others who were shocked by what was reported of his errors in doctrine; zealous accusers were easily found, and partial judges; and, long before Bernard had attained the position which made him a sort of arbiter in theological disputes, Abelard had been summoned, as a suspected heretic, before a Synod convened at Soissons, and condemned without a hearing. None had dared to cope with the practised logician in argument; but his *Introduction to Theology* was decreed to be a dangerous book, and, at the bidding of an archbishop, backed by the Pope's Legate, he

had to cast it into the flames with his own hand. Humbled for a while, he soon became more famous than ever. Thousands regarded him as the champion of intellectual freedom, and resented his persecution as the effort of fanatical monks and narrow-minded bigots to impose their own fetters on loftier and more adventurous minds. He retired in disgust from cities, and reared a monastery in the wilds, named the *Paraclete*, of which he became the unconsecrated abbot. There he gathered round him a little army of devoted disciples, who shared his poverty, built lowly hovels for shelter, and dispersed themselves over Europe as the zealous propagators of opinions, which made free with the faults of churchmen, and assailed prevailing systems of thought with uncompromising boldness.

Bernard and Abelard were by nature antagonistic to each other. The lives of the two men, in contrast, says Dean Milman,\* “give the full measure and perfect image of the time, in its intellectual, as in its religious development.” Considering their position and temper, the extent of their fame, and the zeal of their disciples, an encounter could hardly be avoided. Bernard’s judgment on the Teacher of Philosophy had been carried to Rome in letters to the Pope; and thus it ran :—“A new faith is hammered out in France. Disputations are held about

\* See *History of Latin Christianity*, Book VIII., Chap. v., for a masterly sketch of the New and Old Schools of Philosophy in conflict, and their several aspects towards Theology and the Church.

virtue and vice, with little regard to morality ; about the sacraments not according to the rule of faith ; and about the mystery of the Trinity ; not with simplicity or sobriety, but quite in another strain. Master Peter, and Ernald, whose pestilential heresies you drove out of Italy, have stood up against the Lord, and against His Anointed. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable things, seducing unstable souls, and confounding moral distinctions. They throw dirt on the Church's stainless purity, after the fashion of him who transforms himself into an Angel of light. We have escaped the roaring of Peter *the Lion*, who occupied the seat of Simon Peter ; but Peter *the Dragon* now cometh against us, to assail the doctrine of the holy Apostle." Thus Bernard railed at Abelard. Meanwhile Abelard and his disciples had their own thoughts about the School of the Prophets, who owned Bernard for their master. We find Berengarius, a devoted follower of Abelard, describing the current rumours as to the feats of the Abbot of Clairvaux, in a tone of ill-concealed irony. Addressing Bernard, he writes : " Already has winged fame dispersed the odour of thy sanctity throughout the world, vaunting thy merits and thy miracles. We boasted of our generation as pre-eminently happy, being glorified by the light of so brilliant a star ; the world, we thought, was doomed to perdition, and was upheld by thy merits ; the very mercy of Heaven being dependent on thy will, which controlled the seasons, fertilized the soil, and made the

earth bring forth its fruits. Such life hadst thou given to the Church by the rules thou hadst ordained, that the very devils were thought to roar at thy bidding, and we, meaner men, boasted of our blessed condition in having so powerful a protector."

When such sounds were heard in the two camps, the battle could not be far off; and, accordingly, Abelard, who was jealous for his reputation, and loved the fray like any knight-errant, challenged Bernard to the proof, offering to defend publicly what he had written, if his accuser would bring definite charges before a competent tribunal. Bernard had no misgivings as to his cause, but some distrust of his own powers, as compared with the practised skill of the first disputant of his day. He would have declined the contest, and left the bishops and the Pope to deal with the offender, as one condemned out of his own mouth; but moved partly by the taunts of Abelard and his party, and partly by the solicitations of his own friends, who thought that conflict could end only in victory, he came once again into public view. There was to be a great gathering at Sens on a given day. The body of a patron saint was to be moved from one sepulchre to another, and the King of France, with bishops and abbots, was to be present at the ceremony. Thither the champions went, and a disputation was to be held in the royal presence; but, to the disappointment of both parties, there was no encounter. Bernard quoted passages from Abelard's writings

which he branded as containing poisonous heresy. To the astonishment of the audience, longing as they did to hear the far-famed doctor, whose school was thronged by men from distant nations, Abelard contented himself with simply appealing to the Pope. Fresh letters were written by Bernard to Rome—to Innocent, and to individual cardinals by name—earnest, impassioned, almost dictating the sentence which should follow; and to his great delight, all that he asked was speedily granted. A letter was addressed *To Henry and Samson, Archbishops of Sens and Rheims, and their suffragans, and our well-beloved son, Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux*, in which, after some declamation respecting Peter and the Rock, and a recapitulation of past heresies struck down by the arm of the Holy See, a single sentence condemned Abelard to perpetual silence, and threatened with excommunication all who favoured or defended his doctrine.

Bernard, therefore, was conqueror again. Abelard was past sixty, a humbled and dispirited man, with little heart to prolong the contest, and utterly wanting in the fiery zeal which would risk his personal safety for the propagation of a new creed. Arnold of Brescia was made of different stuff, and fought the next battle with Rome on very different ground. Abelard had made his appeal to philosophers and scholars. From pope, and cardinals, and lordly prelates, and clergy of all ranks, amenable only to ecclesiastical rule, Arnold appealed to the common sense and natural conscience of the people.



Abelard would have substituted new dogmas for the received faith of Christendom, but left the hierarchy untouched, and cared not who revelled in the Church's heaped-up wealth so long as he might pursue his speculations freely in the schools. Arnold, like Wiclif in a later day, looked with burning indignation on arrogance, and luxury, and worldly pomp, and, too often, shameless licence, in the high places of the Church; and the remedy, he thought, was to pauperise the clergy, to give the civil magistrate, not only plenary jurisdiction over all spiritual persons, but the disposal of all lands and goods derived from the offerings of centuries, and to confine Christian teachers of every degree strictly to their official duties, which were to be remunerated at the discretion of the ruling power. The *ruling power*, however, according to his theory of government, was to be neither king nor emperor, but a senate chosen freely by the people; for he was a revolutionist in Church and State,—an honest thorough-going reformer and democrat, profoundly convinced that the world was out of course, by reason of the oppression of despots, and the falling away of the Church from apostolic simplicity, and sanguine enough to hope that a Christian republic, filled with virtuous citizens, and administered with perfect equity, might be built upon the ruins of existing institutions. In France he had listened to the lectures of Abelard, and had doubtless caught something of the free, bold spirit of his master; but from the heresies, which formed the matter of

indictment against the philosopher, he was entirely free. In his native town of Brescia he preached his new doctrine, as to the people's rights and the Church's usurpations, till a flame was kindled throughout Lombardy, and eager spirits in its principal cities began to look out for a golden age of liberty. The frightened bishops appealed to the Pope at the great Council of Lateran, convened at Rome in the year 1139. Arnold was condemned, but never heard, and, like many other reformers in a later day, he fled for safety to Zurich. Thither the maledictions of Bernard pursued him. In a letter addressed to the Bishop of Constance, he pours forth a torrent of the hard names and fiery words which flowed so readily from his pen, and charged his correspondent, almost in the tone of command, to have the man seized and held fast, that he might not vent his poison elsewhere. "I would that his doctrine were sound," he writes, "even as his life is strict. for he is no gluttonous man or winebibber ; but, like the devil himself, he hungers and thirsts for the blood of souls. Driven from his own country, he wanders abroad, *as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. His mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, and his feet are swift to shed blood.* He is the enemy of the Cross of Christ, the sower of strife, the disturber of the Church's peace and unity, with teeth like arrows, and a tongue like a sharp sword." This was the rhetoric to set off the charges ; but the naked facts are contained in the statement to which

no exception could be taken,—that Arnold had “dared to arraign bishops, and to rail at ecclesiastics of every degree.”

Arnold disappears for a time ; but his doctrine had become popular at Rome. None knew so well as the people who dwelt nearest to the popes how truly the picture was drawn of a church corrupted by ambition, and exhibiting in her higher officers scandals which were a reproach to the Christian name. The traditional glories, too, of Rome, as she had once been, floated like a vision before the imagination of the men who saw in popes the successors of consuls and dictators ; and the very name of a republic had a witching sound in the ears of the common people. Innocent was dead ; a feeble old man succeeded him, and left the city in confusion after a reign of five months. Another election was followed by revolt ; the populace made themselves masters of the city, elected a governor with the title of Patrician, and told the cardinals that the time of liberation had arrived. Then came the novel incident of a Pope, Lucius II., mortally wounded in attempting to storm the Capitol ; but the weapons did not fall from the hands of the murderers, and the conflict was renewed. The papal throne seemed to totter, and suddenly there was a want of eager candidates for the vacant dignity. For once a pope had to be sought for, and he was found in the most unlikely place. The cardinals chose a Cistercian monk, a friend of Bernard's, who neither dreamed of advancement nor

desired it,—a man of simple habits, content to live and die in obscurity, and supposed to be quite unequal, in point of capacity and strength of character, to meet a crisis so full of peril. Bernard's letters, on hearing the news, are very curious. None ever bowed with profounder reverence before the Chair of St. Peter, and now a man was chosen to fill it who was a small man by his own side, one to whom he would find it difficult to submit his own judgment,—a devout servant of God, but not gifted, as yet, with the qualifications which would enable him to rule the Church with a strong hand. Thus he writes to the cardinals on hearing the news: "May God forgive you! but what have you done? Here was a man buried out of life, and you have dragged him back again to the noisy world. He is like one who has fallen among thieves, for after he had escaped from the grasp of the devil, leaving behind him the baits of pleasure and ambition, you overtake and seize him. Is there sense and reason, think you, when a pope dies, to rush upon a man who is living out of sight, a mere clown (*rusticanum*), to bid him throw away his spade and hatchet, and straightway carry him off to a palace, clothe him in purple, lift him to the chair of state, and gird him with a sword to smite the nations? The thing is absurd—absurd, or else a miracle. God, I know, has wrought wonders in ancient times; He took David from the sheep-fold, and in like manner it may have been His good pleasure to exalt our brother Eugenius. Truly he is like an

infant plucked from the mother's bosom, or a victim led away to sacrifice, so new and strange will be all his duties, after a life of solitude and contemplation. Nevertheless, since the thing is done, and, as many say, is really God's doing, let me entreat you to sustain your own handywork, and to follow the man you have thus exalted with loyal affection and faithful service."

To Eugenius himself, the new pope, Bernard wrote in a fatherly strain, mingling wise and holy counsels with expressions of wonder and surprise. "If Christ has sent you, you will reckon that you, like your Lord, have come *not to be ministered unto, but to minister*. Being the successor of Peter, you will remember Peter's words, *Not as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock*. The Church of the saints everywhere has large expectations from thee; how much more, then, the house in which thou wast born and nurtured! And shall not I rejoice with the rest? Assuredly I do rejoice, but in the very moment of exultation fear and trembling came upon me. For in losing the name of Father, which I must exchange now for that of Son, I have not lost a father's anxieties and a father's tenderness. I look at the height above me, and then at the abyss which lieth beneath. I see whither you are lifted up, and dread a fall. Truly the place to which you have attained is one of fearful elevation. It is holy ground, the ground on which the feet of Peter once stood. If thou shall turn from the way of the Lord, remember his

tomb is there, and he will witness against thee. O for the ancient days, when the Apostles, instead of coveting silver and gold, were fishers of men ! O that the heart of Peter may be given thee, as well as his place, so that thou, too, shalt say, *Thy money perish with thee !*"

Letters of fatherly advice were followed by letters of rather imperious dictation. Bernard's eyes were everywhere—in France, in Italy, in Germany, in England, all at once. So, when there was a dispute about the archbishopric of York, the Cistercian candidate was preferred, and his rival assailed with ill-deserved reproaches. "Men say that I am pope, not you," we find him writing to Eugenius ; "and come flocking to me with business of all sorts. And well I may take a cause like this in hand, and try to smite down that idol that is set up in York, for I have aimed many blows in vain. The man who fills the place of Peter can destroy Ananias with one blow, and Simon Magus with another ; and (to speak plainly) all men know that it belongs to the Roman Pontiff, and to him alone, to pronounce positively on the deposition of bishops. He, therefore, is in fault, and none besides, if offenders are not chastised, or are chastised less severely than they deserve. What punishment should be administered to this man of York, or, rather, what confounding judgments should light upon him, I leave your conscience to determine."

Eugenius had ample occupation nearer home, for the turbulent spirit of the Roman populace was not

appeased. Arnold was among them again ; a contest ensued between the sacerdotal and republican parties with alternate success. Bernard, as usual, wrote letters, telling the Romans that "the Pope was their head, and the cardinals were their eyes ; that if they continued in rebellion their city would be a laughing-stock to the world their fathers had subdued, and the wealth of the nations would no longer flow to their churches ;" but his eloquence was fruitless for once, and the war went on. The tide of democracy ran high for a while, and Rome was in the possession of men who proscribed the temporal sovereignty of the popes, and said that the people could choose their rulers better than the cardinals. Eugenius fled to France, and during his residence beyond the Alps the current saying, doubtless, became true, that *Bernard was the real pope*. The new régime, however, could not last. Among that factious nobility, and that venal populace, there were no elements wherewith to build up a strong and self-sustained commonwealth. The potentates of Europe were on the Church's side, and Eugenius, *the clown*, of whom so little was expected, proved a brave and energetic ruler ; so, after a temporary disturbance, the revolutionary party was broken up, and things returned to their old course.

Before these troubles were ended, another series of events had begun which absorbed the attention of Christendom, and more than repaired all the recent defeats of the Papacy. News came from the East, in the year 1145, that Edessa, one of the

strongholds of the Christians in the Holy Land, had been taken by the Saracens, and all the Christian inhabitants either put to the sword, or carried into captivity. The kingdom of Jerusalem was threatened, and its feeble defenders, to whom the territory conquered by the first Crusaders had descended, but who inherited none of the zeal, and little of the courage, of their fathers, besought help in piteous tones against the enemies of their faith. Europe was roused again; bishops preached once more in the strain of Peter the Hermit; her captains repeated the old war-cry, and mustered their retainers under banners which the Pope had blessed. The scenes of the last century were revived; devout men sold their possessions to raise money for the war, and outlaws joined their company, hoping to do penance for their crimes, and old feuds were buried for a while amid the enthusiasm which was kindled in a million hearts at once. In such an atmosphere Bernard's own spirit kindled to intenser fervour, and his words of burning eloquence were carried by swift-footed messengers through the cities and provinces of France. Her King, Louis VII., was in the prime of life, free from domestic troubles, panting for military renown, and anxious to efface the memory of past quarrels with the Church by contributing to the Holy War his personal services, the valour of his knights, and the resources of his kingdom. In the spring of 1146 a council was assembled at Vezelay, which grew to a multitudinous gathering of all ranks, the like of which had



not been seen since Pope Urban's memorable appeal at Clermont had been answered by the thundering cry of thirty thousand voices, *It is the will of God; it is the will of God*. The King was there, and bishops, abbots, counts, without number; but Bernard was the central figure. His pale countenance and wasted frame spoke of labours beyond his strength, and of mortifications which were never intermitted through a life of ceaseless activity; but when he spoke, his vigour seemed almost superhuman, and his persuasive or indignant words, uttered in tones of passionate earnestness, swayed the multitude with irresistible force, till *The Cross, The Cross*, became the universal cry; and when thousands of crosses, made ready for the occasion, would not satisfy the numbers who offered themselves, the orator's dress was torn to pieces, and the rags, rudely shaped into the holy badge, were handed on to the more importunate petitioners.

Similar wonders were seen in Germany; and, if we are to believe the contemporary chroniclers, wonders of another kind besides, for whole chapters are filled with stories of the miracles of healing which Bernard wrought in the course of his circuit. All that is recorded as having been done by the hands of the Apostles, to attest their mission of peace, does not amount to the twentieth part of what is ascribed to the Prophet of Clairvaux, while engaged in exhorting Christian men to smite and not spare. For a time the Emperor Conrad held back. Even a private conference with Bernard had

left him unmoved. He was a prudent, calculating man, and had not forgotten the falsified predictions, and terrible disasters of the first Crusade. A second interview was sought, and then the only answer that could be obtained was that he would make his decision known the next day. "Then," says Gaufrid, "while Mass was being performed, the Divine Spirit began to stir the soul of the saint, so that unsolicited, and quite contrary to his usual custom, he said the day must not go by without a sermon. He preached, and towards the end of his discourse he addressed the Emperor, not as a sovereign, but simply as a man, with the utmost freedom. He painted the future judgment,—spoke of Christ on His throne with sinners before Him expecting their doom—represented the Lord Himself as issuing His commands, saying, *What more could I have done for thee, O man?* Hereupon he began to enumerate all the gifts of Heaven bestowed with a lavish hand on the Emperor—the prosperity of his kingdom, his immense resources, his skill in government, his strength and bravery, and so wrought upon his conscience, that with tears he exclaimed, *I own it all; they are God's gifts; I will be an ingrate no longer; now that He Himself has warned and taught me, I am resolved to be His servant.* Then the people raised a shout till the very earth shook with the sound, and straightway the Emperor took the cross, and a banner was taken from the altar and put into his hand, to be borne by himself against the Infidel. That self-same evening, hard by the

chapel where the saint had celebrated mass, a lame boy received strength to walk, and *I was by when the miracle was wrought.*"

The lame boy has to be accounted for, and numbers more of whom the same report was given. We can hardly suppose that these cases were carefully sifted on the spot ; and nervous complaints, for which an excited imagination will undoubtedly work a cure, may have been confounded with crippled limbs or impaired senses. The eye-witness who describes them, a monk of Clairvaux, we would fain hope was not a mere fabricator of lies. But certain it is that a detailed narrative was sent to his convent, in which it was distinctly asserted that blind, and lame, and sick, and men possessed with devils, flocked in crowds to the preacher, and went away sound and whole. We fear it must be added that Bernard knew what was written by his friend, and countenanced the belief that Apostolic powers were entrusted to him for the special purpose of authenticating his mission, and drawing recruits to the crusading armies. These riddles of mediæval story we must leave men to solve as they will. The hardihood of assertion in this case is prodigious, looking at the number and nature of the marvels recorded ; but it seems to have been matched by the credulity of the readers, for neither the reality of the incidents, nor the good faith of the narrator, seems to have been questioned in that age, when all that exalted the reputation of churchmen, or fell in with popular superstitions, was received with greediness. " These miracles," says a modern bio-

grapher, Ratisbonne, "described by eye-witnesses in an unbroken series, and in a style at once terse and lively, make up a volume so large that it is impossible for us to detail them all to our readers. They grew, moreover, to such a number, that the writers at last gave in, and felt they could tell no more." A condensed narrative; a large book; a portion only of the facts given; and every fact a miracle wrought more than a thousand years after the death of the Apostles—so stands the tale which Roman Catholic writers believe and propagate to this hour! From Spire, Bernard made for the Rhine, and after stopping at Binzen, Coblenz, and other places, found his way to Cologne. At the last-mentioned place, we are told, the house in which he stopped was besieged from morning till evening, so that none could come in or go out; the saint stood at a window and blessed the multitude outside; the sick were conveyed to him by a ladder placed in the street, and during the four days of his residence *more miracles were wrought than the chronicler can enumerate*. From the Rhine he went through Flanders, and at Maestricht, at Liege, at Mons, at Valenciennes, at Cambray, the same authorities inform us, *prodigies without number followed his line of march*. So the account swells, the definite grows up to the indefinite, and there seems to be no limit to the appetite of the wonder-mongers—a hundred or a thousand miracles being as easily swallowed as the first half-dozen.

We moderns are sceptics in these matters, because pretended miracles, we find, when put into the

crucible of strict investigation, and canvassed by men who are not predetermined to believe, turn out to be miserable impostures, or strange incidents which may be explained by a reference to natural causes. We are convinced that God does not lightly suffer the disturbance of those laws by which He rules the world, and that miracles are reserved for those solemn occasions when prophets, who declare His will among mankind, need visible credentials to attest their mission. But the writers, from whom we are quoting, if their subject be a saint whom they desire to exalt, or some cause has to be recommended to which the Church, by her highest rulers, has pledged her reputation, seem to think a miracle no more out of course than the common incidents of life. So this same Gaufrid, who tells us about the lame boy, and the untold number of miracles wrought in Germany and Flanders, also gravely informs us that Bernard played the cattle doctor with good success, blessing sick sheep and oxen, and sometimes reproached the Steward of the Convent for letting the beasts die, which might have fed the poor, instead of calling in his aid in time,—moreover that he had a tender heart for all animals, and when he walked in the woods, and saw a hare pursued by the hounds, or a hawk in flight after its prey, he would make the sign of the Cross, and straightway the pursuer would be powerless, and the saint would tell the hunters that their sport was spoiled for that day. William of Thierry has another story, which is a sample of many more,—

that on one occasion, when Bernard was officiating at the dedication of a new chapel, the flies were so troublesome as to make it difficult to proceed with the religious service ; whereupon Bernard, not knowing how else to get rid of the annoyance, cried out, *I excommunicate you* ; and next day they were found dead on the chapel floor, and carried out by pails-full.

When the Crusade was resolved upon, a leader was wanted. "Who shall be the Captain of the Lord's host?" was the question proposed to a great meeting assembled at Chartres, and the people answered with one voice, *Bernard shall lead us ; God will then bless our arms, and all our designs against the Infidel shall prosper.* Baronius in reporting this fact, says, "All the world will hear with astonishment that by an unanimous vote the Abbot of Clairvaux was promoted to the command of the expedition, and was called to march at the head of the officers and soldiers." As there was an universal belief that, in preaching the Crusade, Bernard had wrought miracles of healing too many to be counted, the decision seems to have been a wise one, and hardly need astonish any body. Reasonably might it be expected that, if God had thus owned the work in its commencement, His arm would not be shortened as it advanced towards completion, and that the saint would be permitted to spread confusion through the Saracen ranks. Generalship might be worth much,—but one who could heal with words of blessing, might put armies

to flight by his cursing ; and who so likely to daunt the foe ? Who so fit to put courage into the hearts of the faithful ? Strange to say, Bernard did not absolutely decline the honour, but referred the matter to the Pope. " I neither sought it," he says, in writing to Eugenius shortly afterwards, " nor did I desire it ; indeed, if I can measure my own powers, it is impossible that I should undertake such a burden. Who am I to set the battle in array, or to lead armed soldiers into action ? But your wisdom needs not my teaching ; all that I can tell you is perfectly known already. Only, by the love you have ever shown me, I pray you, let me not be at the mercy of man's caprice ; but do you, whose prerogative it is, seek counsel from God, and take care that all shall be done according to His will."

In the same letter we have a specimen of Bernard's hortatory strain, even when he was writing to the Pope. " You were my son once, and now you are my father," we have heard him saying ; but it was difficult for him to realize the altered relation, and the master's tone breaks out in passages like these,—" The cause is too grave, let me say, and the interests are too vast, to allow of lukewarmness or timidity. The waters have entered into the very soul of Christ ; they have touched the apple of His eye. The time is come when the sword of Peter must be drawn, for the Lord is suffering afresh in the very scene of His first passion. You have the Apostle's office, and must

not decline from his zeal. Shame it would be to keep the ruler's place, and neglect the duties which belong to it. Listen to the Saviour's voice exclaiming,—*I go to Jerusalem to be crucified afresh.\** If others are deaf to that voice, or hear it with indifference, the successor of Peter must not play a double part. No; he will speak the very words of his great forerunner, and say,—*Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.* Friend of the bridegroom, prove thyself a friend, in the time of necessity. If you love as he did, who was thrice questioned about his love, *with all your heart and mind and soul and strength*, then you will have no reserve, no half measures, while His bride is in peril. Nothing will be grudged in such a cause; all that you have of every sort,—bodily strength and holy zeal, care and pains, power and influence,—all will be freely spent. For the very foundations of the Church are shaken, and with your utmost powers you must strive to avert the impending ruin."

Strange, that one to whom all Christian privileges and obligations were solemn realities—one who knew so well that the kingdom of God was "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," and that its citizenship had nothing of a local character about it—should write and talk, as though religion must perish out of the earth if Saracens

Alluding to a well-known tradition as to an incident in St. Peter's life shortly before his martyrdom.



possessed the Holy City! The first Crusaders had more of excuse; the disgrace and disaster which had followed in their train should have kept wise men, for a century at least, from a repetition of the same extravagances. But Bernard's letter *To the Clergy and People of Eastern Germany and Bavaria* is sadly wanting in sobriety; and, being addressed to those whom he wished to enlist as soldiers of the Cross, was likely to be yet more fatally deceptive. He was the man most revered in Christendom. His word was like an oracle to the learned and the simple. None would despair of God's favour whom he had bidden to hope. Gladly, therefore, would men, whose consciences were burdened with crime, and who loved a life of adventure, listen to exhortations like the following: "*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* The earth heaves and quakes, because the God of Heaven is losing His own land—that in which the Saviour taught in old time, and where for thirty years He lived as a man among men—the land made famous by His miracles, sanctified by His blood, and ennobled by the first glories of His resurrection. For our sins, the enemies of the Cross have raised their impious heads, and wasted the Land of Promise with the edge of the sword. And now, if some do not go to the rescue, I tremble lest the enemy should break into the City of God, pollute the Holy Places which are crimsoned with the blood of the spotless Lamb, and utterly spoil the scenes amid which our redemption

was accomplished. The Lord God might send twelve legions of Angels to defend His own inheritance ; or He might speak the word, and the land would be cleared of infidels ; but He chooses worms for His work, and then puts us on our trial. Consider, sinners, how He longs and labours for your salvation. He desires not your destruction, but that you may be converted and live. He condescends to invite into His service murderers, robbers, adulterers, perjured persons, and criminals of every degree, as if they were a righteous seed ; and what is this but a heaven-sent opportunity, an offer of life such as could be devised only by Eternal Wisdom ? Thou brave soldier, thou man who delightest in war, now thou mayest go into battle without danger ; for in this warfare conquest is glory, and death is gain. If thou dost desire to trade to advantage, and to be rich for this world, I will show thee a good market. Take on thee the badge of Christ, and thou shalt obtain a pardon for all the sins which thou shalt confess with a contrite heart. Buy the material only of which the cross is made, and it is worth but little ; plant it on thy shoulder with a devout heart, and, assuredly, thou shalt enter into the kingdom of God."

Ill-regulated zeal is almost sure to be accompanied with cruelty or intolerance ; and in the middle ages, whenever the minds of men were excited by passionate appeals which touched the heart of Christendom, the unhappy Jews were almost sure to suffer. The transition was not very abrupt from the Ma-

homedan invader to the descendants of the men who crucified the Lord. If a Saracen were lawful prey because, by the accident of his birth, he lived in the land once trodden by the footsteps of the Redeemer, why might not the people be punished whom God had scattered into all lands as a righteous judgment for their fathers' sin? So thought Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, Bernard's friend, and a man whose authority was second only to Bernard's own among the devouter portion of his countrymen. "Little profit were it," he wrote to the King of France, "to hunt down the enemies of the Christian faith in far distant lands, if these blaspheming Jews may pour contempt on the Name of Christ, and trample the holy Sacraments under their feet. I counsel not that they should be killed, but only to have them punished according to their wickedness; and what more righteous than to strip them of the goods which have all been gotten by fraud?" Another monk, Rodolph by name, went further, and preached a rival crusade, which presently became as popular as that on which the Abbot of Clairvaux had lavished so much zeal and eloquence. Along the banks of the Rhine a fresh persecution of the ill-fated race began. "They were usurers and spoilers of the faithful; their goods were forfeited, and might lawfully be seized; they were blaspheming dogs, unfit to live;" and in several towns at once, where they were envied for their wealth, and hated for their creed, the sentence was carried out by popular frenzy. Bernard rose

up, at once, as the champion of the oppressed. He confronted the false prophet at Metz, and commanded him, in a tone of authority, to retire to his convent, and not preach till he was sent. He wrote letters to the German bishops, beseeching them to restrain the madness of the people, and to respect the descendants of the patriarchs, for whom God yet had purpose of mercy. A touching record of these events is left us by a Jew who saw many of the atrocities, and gratefully acknowledges that Bernard was the preserver of his brethren. "We were in straits," he says, "like a woman in travail, and we cried unto the Lord, *O Lord, have pity on us for Thy great Name's sake!* And the Lord listened to our cry, and remembered His covenant. He raised up against the son of Belial a religious man, called Bernard of Clairvaux, and he said, *March for Zion; defend the sepulchre of our Lord; but touch not the Jews, for they are of the flesh and blood of Messiah.* Thus spoke the wise man; and the voice was powerful, for all men esteemed and loved him. So the fire of their anger was quenched. Yet the priest who spake for us had received neither bribe nor ransom from the Jews; he spoke out of his loving heart, which suggested good words for Israel. Praise be to Him who saves and comforts His people. Amen."

In the summer of 1147, says Sismondi, Louis VII. had under his command seventy thousand horsemen, armed with lances and cuirasses, besides soldiers of meaner rank; a mixed multitude of pil-

grims of both sexes, old and young, followed the camp; so that more than a hundred and fifty thousand persons all together descended the valley of the Danube on their way to the Holy Land. In the course of the following year mismanagement, dissensions, treacherous guides, lack of provisions, want of discipline, laxity of morals, had left this ill-assorted host at the mercy of their enemies, and the bulk of them had perished on the plains or among the mountains of Syria. For a while the King did not dare to face his angry subjects, and when he was driven home, in November, 1149, he returned in borrowed ships, with a suite of two or three hundred followers. The eyes of men were naturally turned to Bernard. Where was the fulfilment of his glowing prophecies? Was the saint a deceiver? Were his prayers and his blessings of no account? Was it all a mistake that Christendom was bound to arm, and immolate fresh victims on the soil which was fattened already with the blood of believers and infidels? These questions were asked by widows and orphans in a thousand desolated homes; by men who had impoverished themselves to procure horses and weapons for a little band of retainers; by devotees who thought the honour of Christ involved in the recovery of the strongholds of Palestine; and by grasping nobles who hoped for principalities in the conquered territory. Bernard's heart was torn with anguish—the disappointment of his own hopes, the discomfiture of Christian soldiers, the reproaches of his countrymen, all made

up a load almost too heavy for him to bear ; but when he was saddest he had no misgivings as to the past, no sound escaped him which implied that he had hoped too ardently, or promised too lightly in the name of Heaven. In his famous work *De Consideratione*, addressed some time afterwards to Pope Eugenius, he formally vindicates himself from these charges, and re-asserts his prophetic claims. “ True,” he says, “ we did cry peace, and there was no peace. True, the Christian host has been wasted by famine and the sword, and their carcasses lie in the wilderness. True, the spirit of contention fell upon our princes, and God let them wander out of the way. Shall men, then, dare to blame what they cannot comprehend ? Did not Moses promise to lead the children of Israel into the promised land, and did he not fail in his promise ? Surely we are not to ascribe that unhappy result to the leader’s rashness. God gave him the word of command ; God wrought with him ; God confirmed the word by signs following. ‘ But the people,’ you say, ‘ were a stiff-necked people, for ever striving with God and His servant Moses.’ And what were the men whose fate we are considering ? At every stage of their march were they not turning back in heart to Egypt ? What wonder, then, that they, too, should perish for their sins ? But, perhaps, the cavillers will say, ‘ What sign showest thou ? How shall we know that God spake by thy mouth ? ’ I am silent : to that question I answer not ; let my modesty be spared. Do you answer for me, or, rather, answer

for yourself. You know what you saw and heard, and what God Himself inspired you to say." Certainly defeats, and losses, and disappointments were wasted on the man to whom it was as certain that his own inward convictions were promptings of Heaven as that a Divine voice had once cried to Moses from the bush. Assuredly the sins of the Crusaders were abundant enough to account for disasters in the way of judgment. But past experience might have led a discerning seer to expect them all; and as Bernard had boasted in former days that robbers, murderers, and blasphemers were mustered in crowds under the sacred banner, a far-sighted prudence would have dictated some reserve as to their behaviour, and less confident prognostications of success.

Hopes once kindled in a breast like Bernard's were not easily extinguished. When the time of his departure was at hand, and the tired pilgrim was longing for his dismissal, we find his thoughts divided between the glories of the New Jerusalem and the land in which the Saviour once dwelt, where Christians had been disgraced, and the infidel had triumphed. Writing, in the last year of his life, to an uncle, a Knight Templar, a brave and good man, whom he dearly loved, and who had expressed a wish to come from Palestine to see the venerated abbot once more at Clairvaux, he thus pours forth the yearnings of his devout and affectionate nature:—"How shall I answer you, when you say you long to see me, and leave me to say

whether you shall come. Truly I desire the meeting, too, but I fear to advise it. To bring you hither is to deprive Palestine of one who is reported among its bravest champions. Yet, perchance, if you come, others will be moved to accompany you when you return, and so the Church of God will be the gainer; for here all hold you in high esteem. Then you may be able to say with the Patriarch Jacob, ‘*With my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I pass it with two hands.*’ And be sure the Lord’s arm is not shortened; He will yet work wonders, that all the earth may know that *it is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in princes.* Come soon, if you come at all; for I am like a victim ready to be offered. You have well said, in comparing yourself to an insect, for what is ours but an insect life? What are we but ants, wearying ourselves with trifles? Well may we ask, with the wise man, *What profit hath a man for all his labour under the sun?* O let us rise higher than the sun; let us mount up to Heaven, and have our thoughts and affections there before our bodies are transported thither. Yes, my uncle, earth is a battle-field. We must fight here for Him who liveth in the Heaven of heavens; there we shall rest from our labours, and receive our crown.”

Bernard’s work *De Consideratione*, from which we have quoted already, occupied him at intervals during the brief remainder of his life. It was a legacy of love to his friend Eugenius. It was a



noble protest against the ecclesiastical corruptions of the day, and a fearless, magnanimous attempt to bring the practice of the papal administration into conformity with his own pure and lofty ideal. It is an imperishable record of abuses which the best men in the Romish Church were for ever loathing, but which all their efforts failed to eradicate, while princes in turn found their gain in an appeal to Rome, and the priesthood were an army of observation scattered over Europe, with common objects, apart from those of the people, and the laity had not yet begun to suspect the sacerdotal doctrine which enabled one privileged class to wield the powers of the world to come with such terrible effect.

*Morally*, for the last twenty years of his life, *Bernard was Pope*—that is, on all religious and ecclesiastical questions he was the one person whose decisions were respected by devout and undevout men, all through Christendom, as having more weight and authority than those of any other living man. He lectured Honorius, he chose Innocent, he ruled Eugenius. Councils were hardly needed when it was known beforehand that, if they contradicted Bernard, more than half the world would think they were mistaken, and that the abbot was the safest interpreter of the divine counsels. At the same time, *theoretically*, he was the most obedient son of the Church. In the papacy he saw the visible embodiment of law and order. While consciousness of power and his intensity of feeling

made him eager to direct, control, and persuade, where great objects were at stake, his humility led him to desire, above every thing, that the burden of actual government should be cast on some one officially responsible for the result. To know the will of God was his predominant wish, his daily prayer, and the living voice he thought must expound it with commanding authority ; to Rome, therefore, the traditional seat of empire, he looked always with mingled feelings of profoundest reverence and painful anxiety. Hence the didactic treatise we speak of, which might be styled *the whole duty of the Popes* ; hence the plain-spoken denunciations of scandals which he thought were mere excrescences on a lovely form, "all glorious within;" hence the exposure, by an unimpeachable witness, of evils which Luther proclaimed, four centuries afterwards, to more willing ears. Some of the passages, in which Bernard refers to notorious facts, are so curious a portion of the history of the times that we shall venture on some rather lengthened extracts. After a graceful apology, in which he speaks of Eugenius as a poor man lifted up to power, yet still poor in spirit ; as one whom he must pursue, in all fortunes, with the tenderness of a mother ; as one whom love prompts him to admonish, though to men he should seem guilty of mad presumption in doing so, he thus proceeds :

"Where, then, shall I begin? Where but with your worldly engagements, for which, indeed, I pity you most of all. Yes, I pity you, and add my grief to yours, if indeed you

grieve on your own behalf ; and if not, then I grieve for you all the more, because the limb that is without feeling is the least sound, and the patient that is unconscious of disease is in sorest peril. Why is it, let me ask, that you are busied with suits and suitors from morning till evening ? I would indeed that *sufficient unto the day were the evil thereof* ; but even your nights are invaded. Hardly enough space is left for needful repose, and then you are roused to hear men's bickerings again. Patience is an excellent virtue no doubt ; but in these matters I wish you would be less patient. Unconsciously you are living the life of a slave, and I would that you should know and feel it. Wake up, I beseech you, and shake off the yoke ; for a yoke it is, whether you be the slave of one or many. As things are, you are never free, never safe ; every where you are pursued with clamour, and pressed to the earth with this shameful burden. Think not to answer me with the words of the Apostle, *Though I be free from men, yet have I made myself servant unto all*. Was it to help them in getting filthy lucre that the Apostle served his brethren ? Did men of ambition, and covetous persons, and others guilty of simony, and sacrilege, and uncleanness, come flocking to him from all parts of the world, monsters among men, to beg for ecclesiastical preferment, or to get themselves confirmed in their newly-found honours by his apostolic authority ? More worthy of your office surely, better for your own soul, more gainful to the Church of Christ, would be the resolve to listen to that other saying of St. Paul, *Ye are bought with a price ; be not ye the servants of men*. What more unworthy of the Supreme Pontiff than to be toiling day and night in such matters, and for such men ? Where is the time for prayer, for instructing the people, for edifying the Church, for meditating on the law of the Lord ? Every day, indeed, there is the sound of laws in the palace ; but Justinian is the lawgiver, not God."

Ecclesiastical courts have had a bad name in our own day ; but at Rome, in the twelfth century,

they seem to have been ten times worse. The inconvenience of a foreign jurisdiction, with the expense and delay of carrying suits to Italy from Paris and London and Madrid, could be compensated only by the hope of a fairer tribunal, and a sentence pronounced by One wise above the sons of men. Were the Pope and his officers no better, then he was sure to be worse, for the purposes of impartial justice, than average men, tolerably acquainted with the laws and habits of their countrymen, and chosen by their own rulers to settle disputes between man and man. Let us hear what the friend of Eugenius thought of the Papal Courts, when appeals were carried thither from all parts of Europe, and a golden harvest was reaped by a privileged class of advocates who lived on the spoil of Christian nations. After reminding the Pope that Apostles sometimes stood at the bar, but never sat on the judgment seat,—that popes in former days, like the blessed Gregory, had found leisure for study and devotion even in troublous times,—he admits that things are strangely altered, and that men would stare and wonder now-a-days if Church rulers were to say to suitors, as our Lord once said, *Who made Me a judge or a divider over you?* Yet if modern custom must rule, and not the precedents of ancient piety, at least, he says, let the business of your courts be conducted in a lawful and seemly manner. “As it is,” he writes, “the practice is execrable, quite unfit, not merely for the Church, but even for the Forum. I marvel

how your pious ears can tolerate the war of words which proves, not a help, but a hindrance, to the discovery of truth. Put an end to these corruptions, and stop the mouths of men who are practised orators on the side of wrong,—whose very trade is falsehood. The causes which must of necessity come before you, I would have you hear carefully, and decide quickly, but put an end to the delays which are invented on purpose to frustrate the ends of justice, or to bring more suitors to the net. Men do not blush to bring causes into court which have trickery stamped on the very face of the pleadings, thereby publishing their own shame in the face of day. The Church, in fact, is full of intriguers; and seems no more shocked at their acts than the den of robbers is shocked by the plunder which it hides.”

Sorely does the writer bewail the pomp and state which have gathered round the popes,—the swarm of servants, the costly garments decked with gold and jewels, the milk-white horse, the attendant guards recalling the example not of Peter the Apostle, but of Constantine the Emperor. “I know that much of this is forced upon you by custom,” he says, “for humility is held disgraceful by the courtiers who surround you. You have your abode not among sheep, but among wolves; for in your vast city not a man recognizes your authority save for the hope of gain. Yet you are the Physician, remember, of the wrong-doers. You must not cease to be a pastor, but must try to convert them;

and, among other things, you must accept the burden of royal state which is imposed upon you as a necessity, showing all the while that you do not covet it. Call to mind the best examples of bygone times, and imitate the temperance and self-denial of legates and others, whose praise is in the Churches. Rise up, and show yourself what the Pope, as Christ's vicar on earth, is really designed to be,—*the Model of Piety, the people's Teacher, the Defender of the Faith, the Refuge of the Friendless, the Upholder of the Laws, the dread of Tyrants, the Father of Kings.*"

Assuredly, in all this there was ample matter for *Consideration*; and a reforming pope, with Bernard for prime minister, might have cleared away much that was a scandal to Christendom. But the days of both were numbered. Eugenius died first in July 1153, and Bernard survived his friend only six weeks. Beyond all expectation, the feeble, attenuated frame had held out for nearly forty years after the period when his friend, the Abbot William, had put him under medical treatment, and commanded the temporary seclusion from active duties which had led to such unsatisfactory results. The active spirit appeared to have triumphed over natural infirmities, and, while his limbs would carry him abroad, no labour was refused by which he hoped to effect something for the good of his brethren, or the Church's peace; but at sixty-three it seemed as if the frail tabernacle could hold out no longer, and he spoke and wrote to

friends like one who had but to lie down and die. Then, in the very last month of life, the Archbishop of Treves came to him with an urgent request that he would try to heal some disputes between the burghers of Metz and the neighbouring barons, which had broken out into actual warfare. His last active labour, therefore, was an embassy of peace; the journey was undertaken in the hope of preventing bloodshed, and bringing violent men to reason, and he succeeded when all other mediators had failed. The two parties were ranged on the opposite banks of the Moselle, each eager for the fray; at the first interview his remonstrances and entreaties were in vain; the quarrel must be fought out, said the barons, and the burghers tamed into submission. "Never fear," he said, to his friends; "our hopes will yet be realised; God hath revealed to me in a dream that the proposed terms will be accepted." In the middle of the night a message came from the armed knights to the effect that the war should cease; and on an island in the middle of the river, next day, Bernard presiding as umpire, complaints were heard, redress was promised, and the kiss of peace was given.

His strength was almost spent, but he was permitted to return, and breathe his last sigh amid his children at Clairvaux. It was a sad, yet animating scene, that was witnessed in his dying chamber, the grief of those who loved and revered him as the faithful counsellor, and most affectionate of friends,

breaking through all restraints, and the dying saint gathering all his strength to address to them a few broken sentences, to be stored up in their memories as the choicest of their treasures. Solemnly, yet tenderly, he exhorted them to be faithful to their vocation, and then left with them, as his parting exhortation, the words addressed by St. Paul to his Thessalonian converts. *We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you, by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more . . . . For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.* Bishops and abbots, who had flocked up to the monastery when he was reported to be near his end, were among the mourning spectators; and when all was over, seven hundred monks, collected from the surrounding country, chanted the funeral hymn, as his remains were carried to their last resting-place in the adjoining chapel.



## INNOCENT III.

“UNDER Innocent III.,” says Dean Milman, “the papal power rose to its utmost height. The essential inherent supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal power, as of the soul over the body, as of eternity over time, as of Christ over Cæsar, as of God over men, was now an integral part of Christianity. There was a shuddering sense of impiety in all resistance to the ever-present rule; it required either the utmost strength of mind, desperate courage, or desperate recklessness, to confront the fatal and undefined consequences of such resistance. The popes have not merely claimed, they have established many precedents of their right, to excommunicate sovereigns, and so of virtually releasing subjects from allegiance to a king under a sentence of outlawry; to call sovereigns to account, not merely for flagrant outrages on the Church, but for moral delinquencies, especially those connected with marriage and concubinage; to receive kingdoms, by the cession of their sovereigns, as feudal fiefs; to grant kingdoms which had no legitimate lord, or of which the lordship was doubtful or contested, or such as were conquered from infidels, barbarians, or heretics.” Such was the system which Innocent was called to administer when Pope Celestine III. died.

More than a century had now elapsed since the death of Gregory VII. Between the two men, who together built up the fabric of Papal domination to its towering height, we are glad to have passed under review the career of one who did more than either, possibly, to reconcile mankind to the claims and exactions of Rome, but whose aims were of a nobler kind, and whose saintly character entitles him to a high place on the roll of Christian worthies. We turn now to one who, like Gregory, sought to make all human power subordinate to his own, and pursued his scheme of conquest with an energy and perseverance which have never been surpassed. Many circumstances favoured his enterprise. His task was all the easier for the ground already won by his great predecessor, and much had occurred in the interval which made Christendom more willing to admit the Church's claims, or less able to resist. The clergy had made considerable advances in learning, and more than ever were regarded as the privileged class, to whom men accustomed to the hard, rough work of life must look for counsel and guidance. But, what was more important still, their morals were purer, and they were better entitled to the veneration which they claimed from men of every rank. Ecclesiastical discipline had done its work, at least in lessening the scandals which were most rife in the preceding century. General councils had passed decrees and canons, which vigorous popes had enforced; and the two monster evils of simony and concubinage were no longer tolerated

and licensed as they had once been. Consequently, Innocent, in his sharp conflicts with princes and barons, had for his auxiliaries "a more enlightened, a more orderly, a more moral, and therefore a more influential priesthood,"\*—no mean advantage for one who asserted the extremest claims of spiritual authority, and humbled in turn the most powerful princes of Europe. Meanwhile, too, the monastic orders had grown in wealth and power. Their territorial possessions were vaster than ever; continual encroachments on the civil courts had brought suits of many kinds increasingly within the sweep of ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and for the great contest which was pending, the papal army, scattered through all lands, was more compact and better disciplined than in any former era, conscious of strength, jealous of their peculiar privileges, and prompt to obey the word of command from Rome.

Our narrative will commence with the elevation of Innocent to the Papacy, on the death of Celestine III., in January, 1198. He had not completed his thirty-eighth year; but he came of a noble stock, had uncles among the cardinals, and was already known as a man of varied learning and irreproachable morals. Already, too, his capacity for business had been proved by his uncle, Clement III., who, without the usual imputation of nepotism, had made him a cardinal at twenty-nine, and had

\* Waddington's *History of the Church*. See his eighteenth chapter for a clear and able summary of the events comprised in the pontificate of Innocent.

committed to him for judicial investigation affairs of the greatest importance and delicacy. An eloquent treatise on *Contempt of the World, and the Misery of Human Life* had fixed public attention upon him as one who belonged to the Reforming school of churchmen; and his habits were in strict accordance with what he had written, severely temperate and self-denying, free from any approach to the licence which was only too common, at Rome itself, among the higher ranks of the clergy. As it happened, there was no Imperialist or Anti-Imperialist candidate, with a strong faction ready to support him; intrigue in the conclave was less busy than usual; Lothair, of the house of Conti, though the youngest cardinal in age and standing, stood pre-eminent among older men for public reputation; and, after a brief consultation, he was elevated to the vacant dignity by an unanimous vote, while his new title, INNOCENT THE THIRD, whether self-chosen or suggested by his brethren, was at once recognised by clergy and people as warranted by his elevated character and blameless life.

The day of his enthronement was a day of jubilee. The people of Rome had seen aged popes, feeble popes, popes who had intrigued and canvassed for the great prize, and won it from all competitors; and now they saw one who combined youthful vigour with prudence beyond his years—a man of unquestionable talent, and untainted name, who had mounted from a private station to the highest pinnacle of honour without crooked arts or disgraceful

promises. There was a large gathering in St. Peter's ; and from the pulpit Innocent delivered an oration, of which the principal topics were the mighty burden now imposed upon him, and his own confident expectation that Divine power and goodness would sustain him under it. Referring to our Lord's saying (Matt. xxiv. 45) about the *faithful and wise servant* having rule over his household, he speaks great things (*not too great*), as to the needful qualifications for a charge so weighty, for duties so multifarious, for an office so sacred—the burden of responsibility being proportioned to his lofty estimate of the majesty of the Popedom. “Wise I must be, as well as faithful ; *Be ye wise as serpents*, saith the Scripture. Alas ! what wisdom shall I need rightly to understand my duties ? what skill to discern between leper and leper, between good and evil, between light and darkness, between the saved and the lost, lest I should ignorantly call evil good, and good evil, or condemn the innocent, or acquit guilty souls justly doomed to death ? The breast-plate worn by the High Priest was both square and double ; and the Pope, whom the High Priest prefigured, has to do four things—to distinguish truth from falsehood, and good from evil ; to warn men on one side that they keep the faith, and, on the other, that they do not deceive themselves by unrighteous deeds.” Then after some talk, not worth quoting, about the *Four* Gospels, and the *Two* Testaments, and the *four* senses of Scripture, all symbolized by the breast-plate worn by

Aaron and his sons, he adds, "What wisdom is that which has to meet the sharpest wits, to solve the hardest questions, to relieve the most delicate scruples, to explain the meaning of Holy Scripture, to preach to the people the Word of life, to chastise the sowers of strife, to refute heretics, and encourage the weaklings of the flock, while Christendom is kept sound in the Catholic Faith? What man is he who shall satisfy all these requirements? When found, let him have our praises. Well might the Master say, *Who is that faithful and wise servant?* I will make him ruler over My house. Behold me, then, set over my Master's house. Oh! may it be given me to fill, not unworthily, a place so exalted! Assuredly, when the Almighty executes His will by the hands of the meanest of His servants, the glory is all His; for men can ascribe nothing to the human instrument."

Nothing daunted by his own description of the superhuman task before him, Innocent took possession, and, before a month was over, had convinced the clergy and people of Rome, who looked on with eager curiosity, that in the new ruler a firm hand, and a searching eye, were combined with a resolute purpose of rooting out old abuses, and making his government respected by citizens and foreigners. He began with his own house, and substituted a rigorous simplicity for the expenditure which had grown up to unbecoming profusion under former popes. Gold and silver plate was reserved for state occasions; and his meals were served on

wooden trenchers, with drinking vessels of glass. Three dishes sufficed on common days, with two for his chaplain; monks were in attendance dressed in the plain garb of their order; and gentlemen of the chamber, who had waited on his predecessors, like knights and squires in the courts of princes, were dismissed with suitable pensions. The pomp and show, which immemorial custom had prescribed, were tolerated on high festival days; but Innocent's private habits were studiously plain and unostentatious, and a life of strict frugality became a standing rebuke to cardinals and churchmen of high degree, who vied in luxury with the princes and nobles of Rome.

We have seen in what esteem the Roman Courts were held by St. Bernard; the intervening half century had not purified them, and now similar complaints were echoed from every part of Europe, denouncing the shameless venality which infected the whole judicial administration, and had made appeals to the Pope a proverb and a bye-word. Presently stringent orders were issued by Innocent, forbidding the exaction of fees from suitors. A crowd of hungry officials was no longer permitted to throng his ante-chambers, and to levy contributions at discretion on bishops and others who came to Rome for consecration, or on other business of importance. Fixed salaries were substituted for arbitrary payments in the busy workshop where Bulls were verified, Decrees copied, and suits made ready for the hearing. Money-changers and money-

lenders were an army almost by themselves, ready to supply foreigners with current coin, such as costly litigation or a prolonged residence in Rome might require; but the portico of the Lateran Palace was no longer the market-place of these traffickers, who were driven to their own counting-houses, leaving the pathway clear and open to the audience-chamber within. After a while, on three days in each week, the Pope sat in open Court, with some cardinals for assessors; and there, with a sagacity which was seldom at fault, and with the learning of a profound jurist which he had brought from the university of Bologna, he severed the true from the false, reserving great questions for his own decision, and relegating common matters to inferior judges for prompt hearing. Europe soon heard of his fame as one who might be trusted for patient investigation and impartial equity,—the Church's power and interests apart,—and in larger numbers than ever suitors and appellants flocked to Rome.

Having purified his home, Innocent sought to tranquillize the city. Many forms of government had been tried in recent years; but more or less anarchy had prevailed under each in turn. A *prefect* represented the Emperor; but his authority was little more than nominal. The citizens, ever in love with their old traditions, though without any thing of Roman virtue, clung to the semblance of popular government, and up to a recent period had elected a council of fifty-six members, called the *senate*, who took charge of the municipal affairs



of the city. Clement III., however, the last pope but one, had been permitted to nominate the electors, and thus to have a senate of his own choosing ; and this shadow of a representative body had been superseded more recently by a single senator with undefined powers, placed between the Pope and the citizens, and loyal to the one party or the other, in times of strife, as fancy or policy might dictate. Of course such a shifting rule could neither ensure obedience nor command respect, and turbulence was the normal condition of the city, which should have been a model of order and tranquillity. Innocent, accordingly, found all classes sick of misrule ; the opportunity was a good one for bringing rival powers into something of harmony ; and among the early triumphs of his administration was the complete subordination of prefect and senator to his own authority. The former was deputed to take charge of the papal revenues ; the latter was sworn to watch over the personal safety of the Pope and cardinals ; and new oaths of office were imposed which implied nothing less than sovereign power in the Pope.

ITALY, beyond Rome, next claimed the attention of the new ruler, and, in the territory owned or claimed by the Church, there were difficult questions to be settled, and formidable enemies to be encountered. Henry VI., son of Frederic Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany, and, in right of his wife Constance, King of Naples and Sicily, had died a few months before the election of Innocent, leaving an infant son, afterwards Frederic II. Markwald,

Duke of Ravenna, had been his comrade in war, his ally in peace, brave as the bravest, and, like Henry himself, a cruel, heartless oppressor, one who did not spare promises or oaths to gain his ends. His crimes were no bar to Henry's favour, who had annexed to his dukedom the March of Ancona, and other valuable territory, often in dispute between emperor and popes, and by his will had made him Regent of Sicily. Thus elevated to something of regal power, and utterly unscrupulous about the means of further advancement, this man had dreams of conquest and dominion which embraced a far ampler range, and when summoned by Innocent to do homage for his Italian principedom, he had recourse to evasions and delays, and talked grandly about an empire to be founded like that of Constantine, if the Pope would become confederate with him in his schemes of ambition, and consent to share the spoil. Innocent repudiated the partnership with scorn, demanding submission as from a vassal to his lord; and both parties prepared for conflict. So daring an enemy was not to be permitted to beard the head of Christendom on his own soil; temporal and spiritual weapons, therefore, were at once plied against the rebel chief; in most of his cities the papal troops were welcomed as liberators from the hated German yoke; the sentence of excommunication, hurled against Markwald and his soldiers and adherents, frightened waverers into submission; and, after a vain attempt to buy a peace on the terms of swearing fealty to

the Pope, the vanquished captain fled away to Sicily. A few months had sufficed for this contest, and a triumph thus decisive, over one whose tyranny had made him both feared and hated, was hailed as an auspicious commencement of the new reign, wherever the future prospects of the Church were canvassed among its friends, or lovers of peace wished to see Italy cleared of foreign intruders.

Other rivals were near ; but the strongest of them was made to feel that Rome, in relation to the Italian States, was to be like a queen among her vassals. TUSCANY was disputed territory, and a powerful league proposed a compromise which should leave it in possession of a qualified independence ; but unqualified submission was the single condition of peace vouchsafed by the conqueror. *Sovereign Lord of Tuscany*, by grant from the Countess Matilda of pious memory, was a title too dear to be renounced ; and threats of being left to the tender mercies of the barbarous Germans were mingled with renewed assertions of the absolute and indefeasible right of the Church to the fair domain once possessed by native princes. Opposition melted away ; and an interdict presently made the one refractory city of Pisa as compliant as its neighbours. On the side of NAPLES AND SICILY, Innocent had to deal with a woman and a child,—Constance, the widow of Henry VI., and her son Frederic, not yet four years old. Over this kingdom Roman Pontiffs had claimed a feudal superiority founded on transactions of ancient date ; and the claim,

sometimes asserted, sometimes in abeyance, could not sleep while Innocent was Pope. The Queen would not risk a contest; everything was yielded, even to the payment of tribute; in Frederic's name and her own she swore allegiance to the Roman See; and, dying shortly afterwards, committed her son, by solemn bequest, to the guardianship of Innocent.

Such were the results of a single year—the death of Constance, the last of the events which we have thus rapidly sketched, taking place before the close of 1198. But larger interests soon claimed Innocent's attention. His eye ranged over Christendom, and greater potentates were to hear that commanding voice, and in turn to quail before it. We have said that the death of the Emperor preceded the election of Innocent. The loftiest throne in Europe, therefore, was vacant when he assumed the powers of the Papacy. The conflict between Italy and her warlike neighbours for nearly a century and a half—the frequent collision of the civil and spiritual powers in preceding reign—above all, the bitter memories connected with the invasion of Henry IV. and his grandson Frederic Barbarossa—all proved how deep an interest Rome had in the choice of a new sovereign for Germany. Philip, the late Emperor's brother, represented the house of Hohenstauffen, which had had a long reign already, but was odious to many for its crimes. Another candidate was found in the person of Otho, son of Henry the Lion, and nephew to our lion-like Richard; and the names of three archbishops headed the list of

favouring electors who proclaimed him the friend and champion of the Church, and procured from him large promises of loyalty to the Roman See. Both were crowned—Philip at Aix-la-Chapelle, with the iron crown of Charlemagne; and allies were sought, and forces mustered, to maintain the rights of each. Both were strong in alliances; for Philip Augustus of France, by a sort of moral necessity, was on the side opposed to Richard of England; the barons and prelates of Germany were ranged on opposite sides; and an indecisive battle, fought from opposite sides of the Moselle, gave the first note of a desolating war, which fills another mournful chapter in the Chronicles of the Empire.

A crisis, therefore, had arrived which might well test the Papal theory, and prove whether the claim of the Church's head to arbitrate among princes, and its pretensions as a peacemaker in a world of strife, are borne out by the testimony of history. Happy indeed would it be for mankind, if one man were found in each generation wise and good enough to decide with perfect impartiality questions for which nations rush to arms, and strong enough to compel obedience to his decisions! Grand would be the mission, if it could be proved by miracle or prophecy, or by a large accumulation of facts illustrating the method of God's providential government, that authority were given to some competent person, invested with a sacred character, to promulgate decrees on matters of high import, to which the universal conscience shall respond. But, unfor-

tunately, as men are, even if the impeccable court were found, in the case supposed of conflicting rights and claims, with thrones and other great prizes at stake, passion is sure to suggest the readier appeal to arms ; and the golden age must come, when no arbitration will be needed, before the strong ones of the earth, the giants who have armies for their weapons of war, will consent to forego the advantage of numbers and resources, and meet feebler powers on equal terms before a foreign tribunal. Unfortunately, too, whatever may have been the veneration for the Church's head, when the clergy were the sole educators of the people, the Pope was never found whose adverse decision was implicitly trusted by the defeated party, or who united the suffrages of half Christendom in his favour, as a judge of unquestioned uprightness. Yet again, as a decisive disqualification, the gravest questions submitted to Rome for decision were questions of ecclesiastical prerogative—questions between civil rulers and the men who claimed independent jurisdiction—questions in which a pope subject to human infirmity was, of necessity, the advocate of one party, instead of being the calm and patient investigator of rival claims. No doubt, in that age of lawless violence and never-ending strife, before a mind so sagacious and comprehensive as Innocent's, there floated, in his best times, a vision of humanity sheltered, controlled, guided, elevated, by the voice which all were to recognise as speaking with something of divine authority ; and to ends like those

his messages were often directed, when, solicited or unsolicited, he gave sentence between the weak and the strong, or decided matters of conscience which were beyond the cognizance of civil tribunals. But the Empire was too great a stake—the passions of rival chiefs and their warlike partisans burned too fiercely—for breath of his to extinguish the kindling flame; and it may well be doubted whether appeals to Rome, and the hopes and fears generated by the Pope's uncertain answers, did not prolong the contest, and multiply the evils which scourged Germany from end to end.

Unlike himself, Innocent wavered for a time. Otho and his friends besieged Rome with entreaties and promises. Richard of England, no mean ally, a good hater and a zealous friend, with injuries of his own to avenge on the house of his late gaoler, the Emperor Henry, heaped up protestations of eternal fidelity to the Pope on behalf of himself and his nephew; but before the end of 1199 the fatal arrow, shot from the Castle of Chaluces, had ended his turbulent life and chequered reign. Philip was less forward to claim the papal mediation, and for a time was under the ban of the Church for past offences; but parties were too nearly balanced to enable him to dispense with aid from Rome, and two years after the double coronation, the question at issue being as far from a settlement as ever, he submitted to the needful humiliation, and sent ambassadors to Rome. The cause, therefore, seemed ripe for decision. Time

enough had elapsed for the judge, who had obedient servants in every province and city of the empire, to collect evidence as to facts ; and if the election of an emperor were not a solemn farce, it would seem to be no hard question to determine whether a given election was valid, in accordance with former precedents, and the fixed laws and constitution of the empire. No decree was issued, however ; but homily was addressed to Philip's envoys which reads like solemn trifling when we consider the mighty interests at stake. The records of ancient and modern history were ransacked to prove the thesis that the civil powers of government were made subordinate to the heaven-derived authority of the priesthood, and that the ultimate decision of the gravest of all questions in state affairs must rest with Christ's Vicegerent. " Abraham was blessed of Melchisedec, and *without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better*. Priests came before kings, for Moses was commanded by God to anoint Aaron, his brother, and it was in later days, when Israel wickedly desired a king, that Samuel was permitted to give effect to their wishes. Were not Korah, Dathan, and Abiram swallowed up ? Did not David prevail against Saul ?" (a less appropriate illustration, seemingly.) " Was not Jeroboam's hand dried up as he stood by his idolatrous altar—all to teach men the guilt of schism, all to inculcate reverence for the priests whom God had chosen ? In recent times rebellious emperors had fared no better ; and the great Barbarossa, Philip's father, had rued



his persecution of the Church. *Wherefore,*" (the conclusion seems rather impotent after such an array of authorities and precedents,) "Wherefore we will hear your arguments, read your master's letter, and consult with our brethren what reply it is fitting for us to send." To the princes of Germany, on Otho's side, he counselled, at the same time, a comparison of votes, and a consultation with a view to a pacific settlement. Like the voice of an oracle, however, vague as the vaguest, were some of the sentences which hinted, rather than declared, his wishes. "Let them choose a man conspicuous for energy and firmness, at once brave and loyal. The empire needs a head, and the Church a protector, answering to this character. But let them beware of giving their votes to one whom the Apostolic See must reject as disqualified. In that case, a yet greater scandal would grow out of their deliberation, and the Church, in the interests of truth and justice, must refuse to ratify their choice; for God's will, not man's pleasure, must be her rule at all times."

If Innocent's object was not to gain time, it is difficult to imagine the motive which prompted replies like these. Not yet, apparently, had he resolved to commit himself to a contest with half Germany; but to that resolve he came at last. The death of the venerable Archbishop of Mayence, whom Innocent had deputed to bring the electors to an agreement, extinguished all hopes of accommodation; and shortly afterwards a treatise on the respective claims and merits of the rival emperors,

in the form of a BULL, proclaimed to Europe that the Pope's mind was made up. Strange to say, the arguments, on which he relies for the rejection of Philip, were all drawn from facts, which, if worth anything, were good from the beginning. "Our predecessor excommunicated him on a high festival-day, in the Church of St. Peter. Should one thus dishonoured sit on the throne of the Cæsars?" "He swore fealty in the first instance to his nephew Frederic; he is a perjured man, therefore; true, I have disallowed that oath, because it was rashly made to an infant unfit to rule; but it was binding upon him till he had taken counsel with me, even as the Israelites, in the matter of the Gibeonites, took counsel with the Lord." "He is a persecutor, moreover, the son of those whose hand has been against the Church; and Holy Scripture is full of examples to show that children are punished for the sins of their parents." "Even now he calls himself Duke of Tuscany, and claims as a part of his domain lands at our very gates." "All men know that the empire is elective, not hereditary; if son shall succeed to father, and brother to brother, its fundamental laws will be changed, and a vicious custom will grow up into right by prescription." Otho's claims to preference are rehearsed more briefly. "No doubt his votes were fewer, but he had as many of the most influential electors; and, in counting numbers, quality and capacity must be considered, not the mere sum total. His party is small and weak; but God puts down the mighty,

many a time, that He may exalt the humble. His personal qualities seem to us more suitable to so high a dignity; and, besides being himself devoted to the Church's interest and honour, he comes of a lineage, on both sides, which has manifested the like temper—his mother belonging to the royal house of England, and his paternal ancestors being the Dukes of Saxony.” “For these causes,” he adds, “we wholly disallow the election of Philip; and having preached peace long enough, and fully declared our mind by messages and letters of advice, we now openly before all the world give sentence for Otho.”

The die was cast, and indecision and inaction were followed by fiery zeal and indomitable energy, which made the name of Innocent a wonder and a terror to Europe. A legate was despatched to France charging Philip Augustus to detach himself from his alliance with his namesake. John, who had succeeded Richard on the English throne, was exhorted not to desert his kinsman, but to make Otho's cause his own. The princes and potentates of Germany had an Encyclical letter addressed to them collectively, and individual bishops received private admonitions besides, all in the same strain, though varied in their details, according to the character and conditions of the parties addressed. The writer, however, had miscalculated his strength. Philip's partisans met the Pope's claim of jurisdiction with a peremptory denial. Even the sentence of excommunication pronounced against them in the

mass did not daunt them, and an indignant protest was forwarded, which bore the signatures, not only of dukes and margraves, but of abbots and archbishops. "You, Pope and Cardinals, tell us when your predecessors had a place among electors of the empire, or took upon themselves to count and weigh the votes when given. Time was when no election to the papacy was valid till it had received the Emperor's sanction. Do you now assume the place of judges? Then we meet you on your own ground, and tell you that your sentence is a nullity, having been pronounced in the absence of one of the parties. Be it known unto you, therefore, that, without a dissentient voice, we have elected Philip king of the Romans, and we vouch for him as one who will not fail in his obedience to God and His Church."

A collision, therefore, was inevitable; and the war was fierce, prolonged, disastrous. The Church was no peacemaker; on the contrary, her breath fanned the flame, her anathemas gave courage to the party which was the weaker at the outset, her interposition turned a war of factions into a war of principles. These transactions took place in 1201, and the history of Germany for the five succeeding years is a chapter of horrors unsurpassed in the annals of Christendom. The combatants were not disciplined armies contending in pitched battles for the mastery, but hired ruffians, or fierce partisans, the followers of a hundred chiefs fighting with neighbours to avenge old quarrels, or ranging over wide districts in search of plunder. "Throughout

the land there was no law ; the high-roads were impassable on account of robbers ; traffic was cut off, except on the great rivers from Cologne down the Rhine, from Ratisbon down the Danube ; nothing was spared, nothing sacred, church or cloister." \* At last, for very weariness, the leaders began to draw off from the conflict. Philip's cause had triumphed ; Otho had little left to him in Germany beyond his hereditary dominions in Brunswick ; some of his most influential friends had gone over to his rival, and Innocent's haughty spirit was humbled to negotiation and compromise. The terms of absolution were settled, and Philip did not grudge confessions and promises as the price of his anointing and coronation at Rome, when the hand of an assassin saved Innocent from this humbling ceremony. A private quarrel, with this tragic termination, solved the imperial problem, and the death of Philip left Otho master of Germany. Ten years had elapsed—years of anarchy and slaughter—since the summer of 1198, when the two rival princes assumed the royal title, and began to battle for possession.

We have pursued this tale to its conclusion without turning aside to the affairs of other nations ; but during the whole period Innocent's eye ranged far and wide, and comprehended kings and kingdoms in its search. The King of France ranked as "the eldest son of the Church ;" and Philip Augustus

\* Milman's *History of Latin Christianity*, IV. 51.

was in disgrace for having scandalously put away his wife, Ingelburga, before he had cohabited with her for a week, and wedded another in defiance of papal censures. The story is one of singular interest, as illustrating the morals and manners of the age, beginning with the wrongs of a single princess, and reaching a consummation which presents a whole nation as sending up a cry of anguish to Heaven, and calling on their pastors, like doomed men, for life. Simple dislike seems to have been the moving cause of separation; but when kings were thus minded, it was not hard to follow the track of royal pedigrees, and discover a flaw in the original contract on account of the parties being within the forbidden degrees of relationship,—forbidden according to the arbitrary rules which the Church prescribed, and popes dispensed with at pleasure. So it was discovered that the great grandfathers of the King and Queen had a common grandfather; and on this account an assembly, presided over by the Archbishop of Rheims, the King's uncle, had pronounced the marriage invalid. Not content with repudiating on such a flimsy pretence a virtuous lady, the daughter of a royal house, Philip next became a persecutor and an adulterer. The deserted wife was shut up in a convent, and when, instead of quietly submitting to her fate, she claimed her rights, and appealed for protection to her brother, the King of Denmark, and Pope Celestine, she was treated as a criminal, and restricted to something like prison allowance. A noble lady of singular beauty and of captivating

manners was found willing to occupy the vacant place by Philip's side, and a bishop of France had been compliant enough to give the Church's benediction, when Innocent came upon the stage, and at once assumed the tone which befitted his place and character. One of the earliest letters, in the mass of correspondence which fills folio volumes, treats of this subject as one of vital importance to the King personally, and to the interests of the nation which were bound up with his own. Writing to the Bishop of Paris, he says, "Tell him that, if he does not reinstate the Queen, and give her a husband's love, besides the scandal which will attach to his name, he will peril his soul's salvation. Tell him that from this second union none but bastards can be born, and that if evil should happen to his son" (by a former marriage) "his kingdom, of necessity, must pass to strangers. Tell him that lately the curse of barrenness has been upon the fields of France, and worse plagues may follow if his fault be not repaired." Other letters followed to the King himself; but between his aversion to Ingelburga, and his passion for her successor, Agnes, Philip was like a man possessed, and remonstrance did but make him more obstinate and furious. The occasion was one which called out the best parts of Innocent's character, and presented the Church in her fairest aspect, as witnessing for the eternal laws of right, and upholding the weak against the strong. In such a cause the Pope might truly say that he "sought not to please men, but God." In proportion as he magnified his

office, his conviction was deep and sincere that to confront the great ones of the earth when they were rushing upon guilt, and to restrain by ecclesiastical censures those who were beyond the reach of human tribunals, was the work for which the Almighty ruler had advanced him to his high estate ; and when men of power were his adversaries, he never flinched or wavered. So a cardinal legate was despatched to France with orders to hold a solemn council of bishops and abbots, including the guilty Archbishop of Rheims, to summon the King before them as a wrongdoer, and, if other measures should fail, then to proceed to the last extremity of laying the kingdom under an interdict. No appeal was permitted ; the sin was manifest ; the facts were past dispute ; and when the messengers of the council reported that they had been repulsed by soldiers from the palace, and the King, instead of humbling himself and asking pardon, sent word that he would plead by his ambassador at Rome, the term of probation was ended, and the time for vigorous decided action had come. At Dijon, where the assembly had been held, seven days afterwards, when the hour of midnight struck, the muffled bells of the old cathedral rang the peal of death ; bishops and priests mustered by torchlight within the walls ; the monks of the chapter chanted the *Miserere* in a solemn, wailing strain, as if the day of doom were near ; the Saviour's image was covered with a veil ; and the legate read out the solemn sentence which was reserved for the extremest cases of rebellion against the Church.



Infants might be baptized, and the dying absolved ; with these exceptions no religious rites were to be solemnized ; the voice of prayer and praise was to be silent through the broad realm of France. In thirty days the sentence was to take effect, unless the King, in the interval, should have pity on his people.

There was no relenting in Philip ; the terrible words were reported to him, and he clung all the closer to his paramour. "I will turn infidel," he said in his wrath ; "Saladin is lucky to have no pope over him." Meanwhile the nation groaned beneath an intolerable burden. While some bishops begged for delay, and sent remonstrances to Rome ; while in a few scattered places the people were rebellious and put a violence on their priests,—the stern commands from Rome were generally obeyed to the letter. The churches were closed ; no preaching was observed except in the porches on Sundays ; burdened consciences might not seek relief at the confessional ; no nuptial benediction was given to the living ; the dead were buried without a prayer, or the very air was infected while friends waited in hope, and prayed for the boon which could not be granted. Words cannot paint the horrors of a scene like that, spread over a whole kingdom, in an age when the people were taught that the priesthood could shut and open Heaven. All sounds of mirth were hushed ; men did not dare to traffic as at common times ; seven months, during which the King was obstinate and the Pope immovable,

passed like a long funeral day with a nation for mourners.

David's question, *These sheep, what have they done?* may well be applied to such an exhibition of mock justice. The nation were no parties to the sin. The conscience of the King might have been sooner reached, probably, if the innocent had been spared, and his own confessor had dealt with him in the chamber of his palace. Strange to say, while millions of souls were tortured in the cities and villages of France,—while devout men and women longed for the Church's rites which the reckless sinner or bold blasphemer could well spare,—Philip and Agnes were not personally excommunicated. The scourging rod was uplifted, but never fell. For the King's unhallowed passion, for the wrongs of the ill-fated Queen, for contumacy in high places provoking the wrath of the man who gloried in being no respecter of persons, all the relations of social and domestic life were disturbed; the very ends for which the Church of Christ exists were defeated; the ministers of religion were made the officers of justice, and carried into execution the inhuman sentence which made obscure peasants by the ten thousand sufferers for a crime of which they had never heard. If, on the papal theory of Church censures, Innocent was right, and the weapon employed was a lawful one to teach kings and their subjects the great lesson of obedience, then the theory, we say, is monstrous; without such teaching men would find a better way to justice, and surer

safeguards for morality. The unbending spirit, and the brave determination to adopt all the consequences of a resolve once taken at the bidding of conscience, may excite admiration of a certain kind; but the instance before us is one of many to show what fearful consequences are involved in the assumption by mortal men of powers belonging of right to Him who can read all hearts, bend human wills to His own high purposes, and dispense the rewards and chastenings of both worlds with unfailing equity. In fact the man who claimed to represent the Divine Majesty on earth, and in that character to *bind kings in chains*, proved himself a cruel tyrant, and inflicted an amount of misery on a confessedly unoffending people, compared with which the ordinary wrongs of the most oppressive despots are completely insignificant. For the time, religion would look like some spectre of the night, dressed in robes of terror, and uttering strange, unintelligible sounds; and every groan gave witness against the merciless decree which had the name of the Holy One in its front.

In that conflict of stubborn wills Innocent proved the stronger. The cry of agony touched Philip's heart, and, to an assembly of prelates and barons convened at Paris in the summer of 1200, he proposed the question of concession as one which concerned not only his private interest, but the national safety and honour. Agnes was there, once the pride of a brilliant court, now a suppliant to the men who had contended for her smiles, pleading by

her beauty and her tears that her marriage, solemnized by an archbishop, might stand good in their eyes, and that her two children might not be bastardized without fault of hers. But against the imperious necessity of the hour all entreaties were vain. When Philip asked the council what he must do, with one voice they advised submission. "Agnes must be sent away, and Ingelburga taken back," they said sorrowfully, but firmly; and ambassadors were sent to Rome with the news that the King was penitent, and sought reconciliation on the Pope's terms.

Still, however, the old plea was revived; and the humbled monarch begged that the Pope would sit as judge and decide whether the marriage was not actually invalid by reason of consanguinity. The issue is the strangest part of this strange story. Agnes was sent away, and Ingelburga was greeted as queen in the presence of two cardinals specially sent to end this mighty quarrel. Then, having triumphed, Innocent allowed the appeal; and appointed a distant time, six months and six days on, for the hearing of the suit. Delays of this kind, and the unworthy motives out of which they not unfrequently grew, are among the most revolting features of the middle ages. Royal births and marriages are no secret; it was well known how near in blood the King of Denmark's sister was to the King of France; the forbidden degrees were recorded in the canons of the Church. Under such circumstances, a week was time enough for deli-

beration; yet for the period we have specified the hearing was postponed. Cohabitation with the Queen, meanwhile, was not forbidden, but commanded; separation from Agnes was peremptorily enforced; and the ladies being thus disposed of for the present, were to be told some time hence whether they were to change places once again. The day of hearing came, and a cardinal legate sat as judge; while learned ecclesiastics, on one side and the other, pleaded and counterpleaded for a whole fortnight,—a crowd, meanwhile, filling the streets of Soissons, and waiting anxiously for the decision in which, by possibility, was involved the succession to the throne of France. A sentence adverse to the King was expected, when the Court was informed one morning that further deliberation was needless, as he had resolved to take back his wife, and had already carried her off, mounted lovingly on horseback behind him, from a neighbouring abbey in which she was lodged. After all, it was a mock reconciliation on the King's part, though the death of Agnes, which followed shortly afterwards, delivered Ingelburga from a rival.

England had its double royal marriage as well as France. John, like Philip Augustus, wished for another queen, having become enamoured of a beautiful lady, the daughter of a princely house, in the course of a visit to his French dominions in Poitou. In his case, too, there were pretended scruples about nearness of blood; and, to make the parallel complete, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, when deputed

by the Pope to decide upon them, pronounced them valid. So Havoise of Gloucester was repudiated, and Isabella of Angoulême, already betrothed to a grandee of France, seduced by John's blandishments and the promise of a throne, consented to supplant her. Here was a case at least as bad as Philip's; but we hear of no interdict; John was spared, certainly not for his virtues; and the man who had proclaimed so loudly that he must, by virtue of his office, smite royal offenders, though nations should stagger at the stroke, suffered a royal ally to compound for an adulterous connexion by a miserable money payment. When such lofty claims are advanced, consistency is all-important. Even Hurter, Innocent's biographer and persevering eulogist, writes somewhat apologetically when he comes to this passage in the story. "Perhaps," he says, "the Pope wished to bind John more closely to Otho's party, and therefore dealt gently with him; or he may have thought Christendom would be the gainer, if penance were exacted in the shape of supplies for the Holy War; or, possibly, his reason was that the repudiated wife made no noise, and consented to the Archbishop's judgment." Anyhow, the Pope confirmed it. John was to keep his new wife; but the condition was annexed that he must keep a hundred lances in the Holy Land for a year, and build a convent for the order of Citeaux. Why, Philip Augustus, doubtless, would have consented gladly to build two convents, and to maintain two hundred lances, if he might have kept his beloved

Agnes. The marvel is that men of large capacity, writing apparently in the interests of religion and morality, should quietly record such doings, and along with the disgraceful record, should maintain the theory that the Papacy is a mighty boon to mankind, restraining lawless crime, and overawing unscrupulous power, keeping the world in its course by its impersonation of inflexible, impartial justice.

Next came a quarrel between France and England; and Philip hardly had fair play. Arthur of Brittany, the rightful successor to Richard I., if the law of primogeniture was respected, had made the King of France his friend, and a contract of marriage between the youth of sixteen and an infant daughter of Philip had cemented the alliance. The young prince, after a brief contest on the soil of France, had become his uncle's prisoner, and disappeared. Historians differ as to the mode. Shakspeare has one version of the tragic tale, with which Englishmen are familiar. Another story found credit in France, and is told by some writers with much of detail,—that John transferred his nephew in the dead of night from the castle of Rouen to a boat upon the river, and stabbed him with his own hand,—that some fishermen found their nets weighted with something which proved to be the dead body of the prince,—that, on recognising it, they dreaded the murderer's resentment, and got it buried secretly in a neighbouring convent. Anyhow, a formidable rival was removed, and a man of infamous character was naturally sus-

pected of having prompted the crime, even if his own hands were not stained with blood. The lords of Brittany kindled with indignation, and denounced the King of England to Philip as his feudal sovereign in respect of his Continental possessions. Philip listened to their complaint, and summoned John to answer for himself before a court consisting of the high barons of France. As might be expected, the summons was disregarded; then the King of England was declared a false traitor, a man of blood, and an enemy to the kingdom, and his splendid fiefs in Northern and Western France were held to be forfeited to the crown. Philip invaded Normandy, while John played the braggart and the coward alternately, and, when beaten, called to his aid his fast friend and ally, the Pope. "*Peace, peace,*" was the substance of Innocent's reply; "Peace between Christian princes, that they may make common cause against the infidel;" for, amidst all the complications of European politics—while Germany, and France, and England successively came under review, and a hundred questions touching the Church's interest in every Christian state were examined and reported on—the Holy Land ever kept a prominent place in his thoughts and plans. Fresh levies and contributions to sustain the Christian host are a frequent topic in his letters addressed to sovereigns, and legates, and bishops; and disputes among those who serve one Lord are denounced as doubly guilty, because thereby the day of deliverance and triumph is deferred. Philip,



rejoicing in the golden opportunity of adding rich provinces to his dismembered kingdom, while John was hateful to his French and English subjects, was deaf to remonstrances from Rome, and pursued his advantage in successive campaigns, till Normandy was won. His contumacy brought upon him a rebuke from Innocent, longer, sharper, more arrogant in its tone, and more sweeping in its claims, than most which came from that prolific pen. Thus it runs :—

“It has been reported to us by our well-beloved, the Abbot of Casamario, whom we sent to make peace between you and the King of England, that in a full assembly of lords and prelates you declared as follows,—that in questions between you and your vassal you are not bound by the judgment of the Apostolic See. We marvel greatly at this reply, because therein you seem to speak as if you had the will or the power to limit our jurisdiction, which God, yea, verily, God Incarnate, has made so ample as to include all possible conditions and circumstances. . . . Must I not preach peace, seeing I fill the place of Him whose birth was proclaimed by Angels in a song of peace ; seeing, too, that the Lord Himself, when the cup of His passion was at His lips, said, in yet more expressive phrase, ‘*Peace I leave with you ; My peace I give unto you.*’ . . . Besides, no man in his senses can doubt whether it belongs to us to decide questions which relate to men’s salvation or perdition. And do they not well deserve the forfeiture of bliss, and well earn the sentence of eternal damnation, who foment strife, destroy religious houses, let robbers loose to plunder what has been given by devout men for the Church’s use, force back into the world men who had begun to fight for God, besides shedding human blood, oppressing the weak, bringing rich men to poverty, and exposing churches to profanation ? These are the fruits of war ;

and, truly, if we held our peace while such a harvest is reaped, we might well be called dumb dogs, not daring to bark ; and the blood of thousands slain by the sword might be required at our hands. . . . Wherefore, my beloved son, hear not my word, but the word of Him who was Himself *The Word*, and became Flesh, and dwelt among us,—*If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee thou has gained thy brother ; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established ; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church ; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.* The King of England, thy brother in blood, and in the common faith, complains of thy trespass ; he has done it secretly, first, and then before many witnesses ; now, according to the word of the Gospel, he complains to the Church ; and the Church, dealing with you, not as a judge, but as a father, with loving kindness, charges you to make a lasting peace, or to consent to a truce, without delay, What remaineth, then ? Truly, if thou wilt not listen to the Church (as hitherto thou hast not listened), then as a heathen man and a publican (we say it with grief) thou must be avoided and put to shame.”

In this letter, and in others relating to the same quarrel, not a word is said about John's usurpation and bloodguiltiness. Arthur's name is never mentioned ; the plea of Philip and the men of Brittany, that the uncle, as common fame reported, had murdered the nephew, and refused to be put to the proof, is not taken into account. One would have thought, if the Pope were the moral censor of mankind, exalted by God Himself to be the judge of princes, that it was at least as much within his province to take cognisance of crimes like those as to settle

questions of peace and war between rival monarchs. But, for some reason, the worst of the Plantagenets, the man without one redeeming virtue, the tyrant at home, the craven abroad, the wretched sensualist, and profane scoffer everywhere, seems to have been a favourite at Rome, till a fierce dispute with the Pope himself turned their friendly relations to those of uncompromising hostility. The letter we have quoted bears date October, 1203, but Philip went his own way, stormed the strongholds of Normandy, and took his chance of a second interdict. In the course of the following year his victories were crowned by the surrender of Rouen, and the great achievement of his reign was completed. What Charles the Simple had lost by his gift to Rollo, three centuries before, was won back, and the French monarchy assumed a new position, in respect of territorial power, among European nations. Before the year 1205 was concluded the scene of contention was shifted from France to England, and a quarrel had commenced which issued in Innocent's palmiest triumph, and in John's degradation to the lowest point of shame.

The Metropolitan See of Canterbury became vacant, and, without consultation with the Crown, the monks of the chapter straightway elected their own sub-prior, Reginald. The struggles of Beckett's life, and the glories of his death, were still fresh in the recollection of many, but under the arbitrary rule of the two sons of his great enemy, Richard and John, little fruit seemed to have been reaped from

his achievements and sufferings. The Church, it was thought, had been too much the slave of both kings, and the vigour of Innocent's character and rule gave new hopes to those who were most jealous for her rights. The nominee of the chapter, therefore, hurried to Rome, and in their name begged to have his election confirmed. John meanwhile set up a rival candidate, a favourite of his own—the Bishop of Norwich—and persuaded the older and more prudent monks, along with the bishops of the province, to proceed to a new election. Both parties were represented by deputies from the chapter, who claimed the judgment of Innocent, the partisans of the King being instructed to back their arguments with large pecuniary offers. Innocent spurned the bribe, cancelled both elections, and, after two years had been spent in fruitless missions and negotiations, determined to end the strife by nominating an archbishop of his own. His choice fell on a distinguished cardinal, Stephen Langton, a man of English birth, but well known both at Paris and Rouen as an ecclesiastic of pre-eminent ability and varied learning, well fitted in every respect to adorn the highest station in the Church. The monks who had travelled from England in the interest of the sub-prior and the Bishop of Norwich respectively, were plied with arguments and threats, being commanded on their obedience to unite their voices in Langton's favour. The sub-prior's friends gave way, but the King's envoys, knowing well their master's temper, and dreading his wrath, even under the shadow of

the papal throne, were inflexible. Then came the consecration of Langton by Innocent, the rage of the King venting itself on the poor monks of Canterbury, and scattering them from their peaceful home,—menaces from Rome, retorted with defiance from England,—the interdict once again,—John himself, first excommunicated, and then deposed. The humbling and painful details belong to a well-known chapter in English history. While the terrible drama was being acted out Innocent advanced from stage to stage with unflinching resolution, but with a calm and dignified bearing which contrasted favourably with the king's frantic violence and impotent resentment.

Nothing was done in haste. Before the act of consecration the Pope had written formally to John asking for his approval, to be signified within three months. "Long enough," he said, "has the Church, hallowed with the blood of the Blessed Martyr, been without a pastor. Gladly would we keep by our side the man whom we have chosen, so eloquent in speech, so vigorous in action, so blameless in his life; but we yield our private wishes, for the needs of the See are great, and he will be like a pillar of strength to sustain and beautify it. Your credit is dear to us, as well as the Church's well-doing, and we have consulted for both in this appointment. We pray you for God's honour, we pray you by the intercession of St. Thomas, with all urgency we pray you, as the liberties of a Church are at stake which has been weighed down by many calamities,

to give your royal favour to the new archbishop. If, on the other hand, you listen to evil counsels, then we shall be compelled, our love to your person notwithstanding, to have recourse to such measures of severity as are prescribed by the canons of the Church." John's answer was worthy of himself—money was dearer to him than principle and conscience. So the question was argued on his own low ground, and the Pope was warned that he might have less of English gold if he persisted in his choice. "I marvel," he wrote, "that the Pope has not taken into account what the friendship of a King of England is worth to him, for from this kingdom he draws a larger revenue than from all the rest of Europe beyond the Alps. I am resolved in no case to disallow the election of the Bishop of Norwich, and if I am driven to extremities then the crowds who are now flocking to Rome shall pass the seas no longer; the money that is spent there shall be employed to better purpose against my enemies." We have not Innocent's reply to this threat; probably it was received with silent contempt, but, practically, his answer was embodied in a letter to the Bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester, announcing that the pallium was given, and that Langton would be their metropolitan. Past favours are recounted, and expostulation is to be tried again before sentence is executed:—"The Holy See has protected and favoured the King of England, for he is our well-beloved son in Christ; but laymen, as well as ecclesiastics, must learn what belongs to Cæsar, and what

belongs to God. Seek the King's presence ; charge him, respectfully, but firmly, to care for the safety of his soul, for the quiet of his kingdom, for the liberty of the Church, and the honour of Almighty God ; and let him know that he must lay aside his objections to the newly-chosen archbishop, and permit him peaceably to exercise his functions. If he shall not listen to your advice, then rise above the fear of man, lay all England under an interdict, and see that the sentence be strictly observed. Should these measures prove unavailing we will proceed to smite the King himself."

When Lent came, in the year 1208, the three prelates acted on these instructions. The season of penitence became a time of desolation and mourning. The picture of France, as seen eight years before, may serve for the description of England in the day of her calamity. Again the churches were closed, the priests silenced, the symbols of religion veiled from public view ; the land was covered, as it were, with sackcloth from end to end. In common times the clergy were exalted to the place of mediators between earth and Heaven ; and now to miss their prayers, to go about unconfessed and unabsolved, to live apart from holy men in a world surrendered to the powers of darkness,—all this had a vague, mysterious horror about it, which made the visitation worse than plague, or famine, or the sword. Yet for five years, while the burden lay upon our poor land, the King doggedly maintained his ground. The bishops and clergy, almost to a man, obeyed

the Pope's bidding—two bishops only, besides John of Norwich, siding with the King; and when threats could not draw them to his side, they were hunted down as an army of traitors enlisted under the banner of his great enemy. His demeanour and policy, meanwhile, instead of conciliating friends, gave every advantage to Innocent. He raged like a madman, vented threats and oaths of horrible sound, levied taxes at the sword's point which were heavy beyond all precedent, and gave the rein to his lusts, till the wives and daughters of his nobles were not safe from his assaults.

Why the patience of John's subjects lasted so long, and the sacrilegious oppressor, the self-willed, hard-hearted enemy of God and man was not deposed, regularly or irregularly, by the barons of England, before he was deposed by the Pope, is a mystery which we cannot solve. But the power of kings was terrible in those days, and the limits of human endurance were not soon reached. Certainly, if popes might smite Christian sovereigns, sentence of excommunication followed John's public crimes too slowly; but, at last, in the spring of the year 1213, it came, and was speedily followed by another instrument, which declared the throne to be forfeited, absolved all John's subjects from their oaths of allegiance, and charged Philip of France, as the King of England's nearest neighbour, and first of the princes of Christendom, to do justice on the offender. Philip, nothing loth, accepted the commission, and gathered an army. His nobles were summoned to bring their



levies as for a new Crusade; a shorter journey awaited them, and richer spoil; when suddenly the news was brought from England that the contest was ended, and John had yielded himself unreservedly to the Pope's terms. Spreading disaffection at home concurred with the threatening danger from abroad to convince the man who had fought to the last gasp, that nothing but submission could save his throne; and from the height of insolent defiance he passed, in a little month, to the lowest depths of humiliation, putting his crowned head in the dust, and begging the Pope's legate to trample it under his feet.

Pandulph was the legate's name; and the memorable scene, in which Shakspeare has recorded his country's shame, gives us the history of the times in a few pregnant lines:—

“ *Enter KING JOHN; PANDULPH with the Crown and Attendants.*

“ *K. John.* Thus have I yielded up into your hand  
The circle of my glory.

“ *Pandulph.* Take again

[ *Giving John the Crown.*

From this my hand, as holding of the Pope,  
Your sovereign greatness and authority.

“ *K. John.* Now keep your holy word; go meet the French,  
And from his holiness use all your power  
To stop their marches, 'fore we are inflamed.  
Our discontented countries do revolt;  
Our people quarrel with obedience;  
Swearing allegiance, and the love of soul,  
To stranger blood, to foreign royalty.  
This inundation of mistemper'd humour

Rests by you only to be qualified.

Then pause not ; for the present time's so sick,  
That present medicine must be minister'd,  
Or overthrow incurable ensues.

“ *Pandulph*. It was my breath that blew this tempest up,  
Upon your stubborn usage of the Pope ;  
But, since you are a gentle convertite,  
My tongue shall hush again this storm of war,  
And make fair weather in your blustering land.”

Innocent could well afford to “hush the storm,” for his victory was complete ; every point was yielded which had been in dispute between himself and the King. Compensation was given to the plundered bishops ; men, whose only crime was that they had obeyed the Pope, were recalled from banishment ; all ecclesiastics who had accepted preferment from the King's hand during the time of trouble, who had shared his counsels, or held religious communion with him of any kind, were degraded from their spiritual offices till they had been to Rome for pardon. Langton, who through all these years had been entertained in a French convent, was put in possession of the dignities and emoluments of the Metropolitan See. Lastly, in the most absolute terms that language could supply, the King acknowledged himself the Pope's vassal, and promised for himself and his successors to pay the yearly tribute of 1000 marks in token of allegiance. Pandulph left England with this extraordinary deed of gift, signed with the King's hand, and sealed with his seal, carrying with him at the same time 8000 marks for the banished bishops. To the King

of France he was a less welcome messenger. The summons to war had excited his hopes and flattered his ambition ; and when he was told that he might disband his armies, as the Pope no longer needed a champion, he felt like one who had been trifled with and insulted.

During these busy years Germany was not quiet, and the affairs of the empire, always intermingled with the politics of Italy, were enough by themselves to occupy the attention of any man of less active energy than Innocent. Philip's sudden removal, in the very hour of triumph, gave Germany a fresh chance for peace, and never did an impoverished and exhausted country stand more in need of it. Over and above the battle of the emperors, there were local feuds and private wars, multiplying twenty-fold the miseries entailed on those who were combatants on neither side. While the powers of government were in abeyance, military chieftains took the opportunity of prosecuting their private quarrels ; their dependents were summoned from the field for attack or defence ; and hamlets depopulated, as well as castles stormed and razed, were the memorials of conquest. Banditti, too, in large numbers prowled abroad, and shared the spoil with the myrmidons of war ; so that villagers, glad to escape with their lives, left home and farm, and flocked into walled towns for security. As if God would scourge men for preying on each other, and outraging all laws human and divine, other calamities, which come but rarely, were

crowded into a brief space while these troubles lasted, and made Germany look like a doomed country. In Bavaria, an earthquake destroyed several towns and villages, and the inhabitants of a wide region lived for a whole year in rude huts hastily built up for shelter. A fearful distemper ran through a large portion of the empire, making havoc of those whom the sword had spared. The seasons, too, were out of course ; a winter of unprecedented length was followed by a summer of stifling heat, and for three successive years, in some provinces, the dearness of provisions made a famine among the peasantry. No wonder that men sighed for repose ; and the lull in military operations, consequent on the assassination of Philip of Swabia, gave a gleam of hope to all who wished well to their distracted country.

Otho, when the news reached him, lost no time in asking for Innocent's countenance and support. Innocent replied by a letter promising his best endeavours to crush opposition, and giving wise and paternal counsel to Otho himself as to his demeanour in this crisis of his fortunes :—"My son, be gentle and courteous to all in turn ; avoid all harsh and irritating conduct ; grant favours where you can, and draw largely on the future by promises ; but, above all, be true to your word when pledged, and you will find your gifts requited a thousand-fold. Offer ample guarantees for the safety of the temporal and spiritual princes, and take care that your public acts are guided by wisdom

and graced with a kingly bearing." These friendly protestations were followed up with letters to the chiefs of both the rival parties, in which they were told that Otho was clearly Emperor by the judgment of Almighty God, and were charged to seize the present occasion of terminating a strife so ruinous to the empire, and full of disaster and discredit to Christendom at large. Men's ears were open to a voice like this. It came at the right time from the right quarter. A great assembly at Frankfort, made up of men who fairly represented the empire, and who had been ranged hitherto on opposite sides, hailed Otho IV. as their sovereign without a dissentient voice, and gladly heard his determination to wed Beatrice, Philip's youthful daughter and heiress, as a fresh pledge of peace.

When ambassadors from Otho carried the news to Rome, they had a cordial greeting, and bore back a gracious reply. "I was sick, and am well," he wrote to the Emperor, "so greatly do I rejoice in your success;" then, in the style which Innocent knew so well how to assume, combining perfect courtesy with a tone which implied his own pre-eminence, he adds, "It has long been the custom for princes of the highest distinction to journey to Rome, and there prefer their claim to the imperial crown" (there had been another practice, not very long before, of which Innocent takes no account, for emperors to choose popes); "but we find no fault with the mission of the worthy persons whom you have deputed to represent you, though they come

not as petitioners for the crown, but only to seek counsel from us in the present state of affairs. Doubtless what is undone now will be done at some future period." Another letter speedily followed, yet more gracious, full of glowing hopes for the future, prognosticating a new era for Christendom now that the rule of wisdom and equity, as embodied in the Church's decrees, was to be enforced by a temporal prince at once so loyal and so mighty. The Pope and the Emperor, in fact, were to be partners in one great sovereignty; other princes were to be overawed or propitiated, and a golden age of peace, after convulsions which had almost shaken the world to pieces, was to be the fruit of their united sway. Otho is his "dear son;" they have but "one mind and will, one heart and soul;" "Pen cannot write, words cannot express, no mind can conceive, the blessings which will result from an union so perfect;" "To us is confided the government of the world for this age; and, if God so wills it, no power shall stand against us; for have we not the *two swords* whereof the Apostles spoke when the Lord gave answer, *It is enough?* Clearly these swords are represented by the pontifical and royal powers which we possess in all their plenitude; and if we are true to each other, our success must be complete. But united we must be; for the wicked have had a long reign, and we shall have to build up the social fabric from its ruins."

Bright days of promise, soon to be overclouded with the tempest of war! Otho proved a faithless

ally, and was indifferently qualified as a regenerator of society. Again and again popes had to learn that the promises of emperors, before their coronation day, were but a broken reed. Otho's were as profuse as those of any of his predecessors. Bishops were to be freely chosen; the revenues of vacant churches were to be untouched; all lands in dispute, the famous gift of the Countess Matilda inclusive, were to be surrendered to the Holy See; heretics, at the Pope's bidding, were to be smitten with the sword. All that words could give, in the way of dutiful respect and unqualified submission, was yielded in the most ample measure. On the faith of these pledges Otho was received at Rome in the autumn of 1209 as one whom the Pope delighted to honour. No success of Charlemagne was ever more magnificently attended; nor did the Church of St. Peter ever present a more imposing spectacle, than when Innocent, whose lofty mien well befitted the grandeur of the occasion, put the imperial crown with his own hand on Otho's head. The morrow came, and already the seeds of dissension were sown between the two men by whose hearty co-operation Europe was to be pacified. The Germans were overbearing; the Roman citizens were impatient of their presence, and little satisfied with the largesses of the Emperor; resentful feelings flamed up into actual violence. The lights of the festival which followed the gorgeous ceremony of the morning were hardly extinguished when an attack by the Roman populace took the Emperor's guards by sur-

prise ; many persons of distinction fell in the fray ; and the number of slain may be inferred from the fact that Otho's claim of indemnity from the Pope included the estimated value of 1,100 horses. The demand was refused ; and Otho left Rome in displeasure.

Such was the beginning of a contest which soon proceeded to extremities. It is difficult to say whether Otho was playing false from the beginning, or whether he was tempted by opportunity to give all his oaths to the winds. At any rate, scarcely three months had passed from the day of his coronation when Tuscany was invaded, Romagna threatened, and the March of Ancona, which Innocent had wrested from Markwald, bestowed on a cousin of his own. Again the grant of the Countess Matilda was questioned ; grave lawyers were commanded to inquire into its validity, and, with such a client, were not unlikely to report that popes had taken advantage of troublous times to rob the empire ; so the severed territory was resumed. Sienna, Florence, Lucca, and Pisa, opened their gates in succession to the Emperor. He was soon master of Central Italy, and even the approaches to Rome were occupied with German troops, so that bulls were confided by stealth to travelling merchants, and strangers were turned back who sought the capital of Christendom for their several needs.

Innocent, thus provoked and betrayed by one who owed him a large debt of gratitude, bore much and



waited long before he took the Church's weapons in hand. He could thunder against kings when it pleased him ; but with Otho he tried entreaty and remonstrance, refusing apparently to credit his baseness till conviction was forced upon him. " We are full of grief," he wrote, " to see one, whom we hoped to find the Church's protector and friend, turned to be an enemy. Consider, I pray you, by whose help you were advanced to the place you occupy, and remember that it is the King of Heaven who casts down the mighty from their seats, and lifts the humble from the dust. Gifted as you are with noble qualities, you would shine like the sun among meaner princes, if you would give due respect and observance to the Holy See. The more we love you, the deeper is our sorrow when we see you brought to shame, and risking your soul's salvation, by persevering obstinacy in guilt." Otho's reply might have come from one of the leaders of the Reformation, and we might have respected him as battling for a great principle if he had not first bought the papal sanction with perjury. " Be content with your spiritual functions ; I do not desire to limit them ; rather will I protect you to the uttermost in their due discharge. But in matters of temporal government I am absolute, and you have no business to interfere. In truth, men who administer the sacraments are not fit persons to wield the sword of the magistrate."

This, however, was no mere private quarrel between Pope and Emperor about the limits of

civil and ecclesiastical authority. Otho coveted more spoil, and his army was more than a match for any opposing force. So Naples was soon overrun, and then he cast his lusting eyes on Sicily, young Frederic's inheritance, not from his father the Emperor, but from his mother Constance. The term of guardianship had expired; but an unprovoked attack on one who had been the ward of Innocent was a fresh act of daring on Otho's part, and looked like braving the papal censures in the spirit of insolent defiance. Five times did an abbot, venerable for years and piety, seek the Emperor, in the hope of turning him from his purpose; but all in vain. Success had made him bold; he had tasted the sweets of military adventure, and was followed gladly by his soldiers over the sunny plains of Italy; he preferred fresh conquests, fairly or unfairly made, to the more difficult work of stanching the bleeding wounds of his distracted country. In a letter of complaint from Innocent to Philip Augustus we find that his proud heart was swelling with thoughts of more distant enterprises,—Italy and Germany not being large enough for his ambition,—“The man dares to say that all the kings in the world shall be subject to him. Once, when we were exhorting him to peace, he answered proudly that while you kept possession of his uncle's territory,” (alluding to John and the conquest of Normandy) “he should never be able to lift up his head without blushing, and that we might keep our proposals to ourselves till the lost provinces were

regained. With shame as well as sorrow, we write to you in this strain, because you forewarned us what to expect ; but we console ourselves in leaving the cause with God, whom it repented in olden time that He had made Saul king."

Here was a foe, then, worth striking down. It was no private quarrel, but the common cause of Christendom. A whole year had elapsed after the Emperor broke faith, and began his war of aggression, before sentence of excommunication was hurled against him ; but the threatened invasion of Sicily was the crowning act of contumacy ; and, hoping to arrest the march of the conqueror, on Ascension Day, 1211, Innocent proclaimed to Europe that Otho was cut off from the communion of the faithful, and, as an outlawed person, could no longer rank with Christian princes. When the decisive step was taken, nothing was left undone to gather strength against the deposed emperor. Naples had done homage to the usurper ; Pisa had placed her galleys at his disposal ; the canons of Capua had celebrated divine service in his presence ; and each of them was punished by an interdict. Philip Augustus, a willing ally in such a cause, was summoned to the Church's aid. Siegfried, Archbishop of Mayence, whom the Emperor Philip had expelled, and Innocent had protected, in former days, now went as legate to Germany, with a commission from Innocent to propose the King of Sicily to them as emperor. The news that Otho was degraded, and a prince of the ancient line to be nominated as his

successor, were received in Swabia and other countries with transports of joy; the old feeling of loyalty to the Hohenstaufen combining now with religious zeal and restored confidence in the cause which the Pope espoused; but among the princes and prelates whom the legate convened were prudent men and lovers of peace, who dreaded another civil war, and hesitated about committing themselves to a new pretender. Otho had the energy and commanding talents which were specially needed to heal divisions and restore public order; and many clung to the hope that, after making terms with Innocent, he would come back, and rule his own country well. By degrees, however, this hope grew fainter. Three years, nearly, spent beyond the Alps, might count almost for a virtual abdication; and, with or without the Emperor's privity, misgovernment had prevailed very widely during his absence. To the bishops it was reported that the Emperor was an enemy to their order; that he spoke of them with contempt, and had been heard to say that he would curtail their pomp and state, allowing twelve horses, at the most, to an archbishop, and six to a bishop; and their influence was actively employed to fan the spreading flame of disaffection. At last, the insurrectionary party became an organized confederacy; and deputies were sent to Frederic, begging him to put himself at its head, and make a bold cast for the crown which Otho had justly forfeited.

The messengers reached Sicily in the beginning of the year 1212. The King had just completed

his seventeenth year ; and up to this time had led a tranquil life in his sunny isle, amid a loyal and united people. But he had in him the blood of a race which loved adventure, and seemed to be born for empire. His tutors had been faithful to their trust ; and a rich soil, combined with careful culture, had borne fruit which made him the most accomplished prince of his time. Young in years, too, he was a full-grown man in stature and intelligence ; a parent, moreover ; for the birth of a son just concurred with the visit of the German envoys. No wonder that the son and grandson of emperors wished for himself and his descendants to recover his ancestral greatness. Otho, too, was meditating a descent upon Sicily ; to attack the enemy in his own quarters would be a fair reprisal. Anyhow, the resolve was taken. Without an army, trusting the report which reached him of the discontent of Germany, he started to win or lose a crown. At Rome he had a friendly greeting and fatherly counsel from Innocent ; but Lombardy had to be crossed ; the Milanese were in rebellion against the Pope, Otho's partisans had possession of the passes of the Alps, and without cautious travelling and clever guidance a hopeful enterprise would have been spoiled, and the destinies of Germany changed by the Prince's capture. He escaped the pursuers, found 1,500 knights at Basle to welcome him, with the Bishop of Strasburg at their head, gained friends month by month, while Otho lost ground, and before the year ended was master of the south of Germany.

Still, however, a partisan warfare lingered on, and no great battle was fought beyond the Rhine. The contest was really decided at Bouvines, in Flanders. There, on the 27th of July, 1214, Philip Augustus encountered the combined forces of the Emperor Otho, the King of England, and the Count of Flanders, and won a victory more important than any which had crowned the French arms for centuries. The nature of the contest, in one aspect, may be inferred from the reported address of the King of France to his captains, when the troops were mustering for action: "God has delivered these men into our hands. They have rebelled against Him, and are purposing to rob the clergy of their possessions. Therefore it is that they lie under the awful sentence of excommunication. We have the Church's prayers, and by the help of them we shall overthrow her enemies. I give battle for the Church, as also for you, my brave subjects, and for my own honour and kingdom." The triumph was Innocent's, as well as Philip's, for Otho's cause was lost from that hour. Frederic, too, though not present, reaped the spoil of victory, and twelve months afterwards, when he was less than twenty-one, received the crown of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle.

John had a harder fight at home, and a more humbling defeat; but Innocent, as in duty bound, was his fast ally. To his people he was oppressive and arbitrary beyond the iron-handed princes of his house, but to the Pope henceforth he was an

obedient vassal and a cherished son ; so, in the famous contest with his barons which speedily ensued, all the influence that the Holy See could command was thrown into the scale against the cause of English liberty. A cardinal legate had been sent over, ostensibly to arbitrate between the King and the bishops who had been banished and plundered, and to settle what amount of compensation should be given ; but his commission extended to other matters, and much disgust was excited by the pomp of his retinue, as well as the lordly airs assumed by him in the punishment of ecclesiastical offenders, and the disposal of benefices, often to unworthy persons, without consultation with the bishops. Langton, though the Pope's nominee, was no servile adherent of the papacy. He was a peer of England, and foremost among those who were struggling peaceably against their dastardly and faithless sovereign. When the contest grew more serious, and both parties appealed to the Pope, all complaints of tyranny and treachery were met with the simple recommendation to be obedient and loyal subjects, leaving disputed questions to be settled by the one impartial judge, their lord and his. Happily, the men who wrung Magna Charta from their king (June 15, 1215) trusted, instead, to their good cause and their own right arms, and the Pope was left to rebuke and threaten when the deed was done. Matthew Paris gives the bull in which Innocent recounts, at length, from the Roman point of view, the events which had recently taken place in England ;

and a very interesting comment it is for Englishmen to read on one of the most stirring chapters in their history. "In former times," it says, "the King had grievously offended God and His Church, but God had given him grace to repent, so as to make ample reparation for his fault, by satisfying the Church for all injuries and losses, and making over his kingdom of England and Ireland to St. Peter and the Church of Rome. Moreover, as a further proof of his pious disposition to Almighty God, he had taken the sign of the Cross, and was making preparations on a large scale for an expedition to the Holy Land. But the great enemy of mankind," it goes on to say, "who loves to hinder all good purposes, had by his subtlety stirred up the barons of England to revolt. They had rejected all overtures of peace, had refused to wait for messengers from Rome, who would have counselled humble petitioning instead of insolent remonstrance, had taken up arms against their sovereign, and occupied the capital of the kingdom; and, lastly, had spurned the king's appeal to the Pope, though the decision properly belonged to him as lord of the realm. Then he proposed that four discreet persons should be chosen on either side, who, in conjunction with us, should determine all matters in dispute, promising that all abuses which had grown up in his reign should be redressed; but they did not choose to accept these conditions. At last, the King told them plainly that as the sovereignty of the kingdom belonged to the Church of Rome he had neither the right nor the power, without



our special command, to make any changes to our detriment ; moreover he again claimed a hearing in our presence, committing himself and his kingdom, with all his rights and dignities, to the protection of the Apostolic See. But when he could not obtain their consent, he demanded of the archbishops and bishops the execution of the orders received from us, namely, that they would maintain the fundamental laws of the Church, and extend their protection to him as a person entitled to all the privileges of one pledged to the holy war. When this, too, was denied him, seeing himself deserted of advisers and helpers, he did not dare to refuse their most presumptuous demands, but yielding to force, and constrained by fear, as may happen to a man not wanting in courage, he made a treaty with them which we pronounce to be utterly disgraceful, and contrary to law and justice. Wherefore we, calling to mind what the Lord hath said by His Prophet,\* ‘ *I have set thee above the nations and above the kingdoms, to pluck up and to destroy, to build and to plant;*’ and, again, what was spoken by another Prophet,† ‘ *Loose the bands of wickedness, and undo the heavy burdens,*’ in the Name of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, acting by the authority of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, as also on our own behalf, and having taken counsel with our brethren, do altogether disallow and condemn this agreement, and, under pain of anathema, forbid the King to

\* Jeremiah, i. 10.

† Isaiah, lviii. 6.

observe it, and the barons, with their colleagues, from insisting on its observance."

The truce, we know, was short, and the quarrel became fiercer than ever. The barons were soon in arms again, and the King was raging like a madman, swearing his deepest oaths, and venting his disgust at the transactions at Runnymede in cruelties of the most revolting kind. Foreign captains were invited over, and bribed with large promises of plunder from the estates of the insurgents; and mercenaries from many lands—men steeled against pity by a life of desultory warfare—were let loose upon his unhappy subjects; one cry of execration went up from the towns and villages of England. When the threatened excommunication of the barons arrived from Rome, Langton and the bishops refused to publish it. Clergy and laity were banded together against the tyrant, and resolved to brave the worst together rather than bow their necks to the hated yoke. But the man who boasted that he represented the majesty and the justice of Heaven, and that kings were made amenable to him for the world's peace, was John's unflinching advocate and protector. The King sent ambassadors to Rome to tell his own story, and Innocent's eulogists may plead that the worst excesses of a reign, which was a scandal to Christendom, were not fully known to him; but Langton was at Rome, too, suspended from his functions for contumacy, yet present by virtue of his rank at the great Lateran Council, which numbered at its opening seventy-one primates and metropoli-

tans, four hundred and twelve bishops, and nine hundred abbots and priors. All was known to him, and his word might have been implicitly trusted.

We have seen that Innocent was victorious once, both in France and England; but in both countries he was destined to sustain defeat before his papacy was ended. The barons, say our chroniclers, sought help across the sea, and tried the dangerous experiment of inviting Louis, the eldest son of the King of France,\* to help them against their own sovereign, promising to transfer their allegiance, if he should succeed in ridding them of a tyranny which had become insupportable. A legate was despatched from Rome to Philip Augustus, with a solemn injunction not to interfere in the affairs of England, nor to permit his son to make common cause with excommunicated rebels; but he was met at Lyons by a spirited reply from the King and the grandees of France. "The kingdom of England," it was said, "never was the patrimony of St. Peter, nor is it now, nor ever shall it be. John was a convicted

\* The wife of Louis,—Blanche of Castile, the famous mother of St. Louis,—was nearly allied to the English crown, being a grand-daughter of Henry II. But, as the Pope argued in this conference, supposing John and his heirs to be set aside, there were four nearer claimants—namely, Arthur's sister, the daughter of John's elder brother; the Emperor Otho, fallen but still surviving, the son of Henry II.'s eldest daughter; besides a brother and an elder sister of Blanche herself. Louis's pretensions were much like those of William III., combining other claims with power to assist the disaffected party against the sovereign whom it was intended to depose.

traitor in King Richard's time ; he has since been a convicted murderer ; our Court of Peers tried and condemned him. Besides, a sovereign cannot dispose of his kingdom without the consent of his barons ; and if the Pope gives his sanction to such a treason, he will establish a most dangerous precedent." The words were King Philip's, and they were loudly echoed by his lords. "By this article we will stand to the death," they cried, "that no prince can at his own discretion part with his sovereignty, nor become the tributary of any other prince ; if it were so, his nobles would be slaves."

The hearing of this royal suit was adjourned to Rome, whither Louis sent deputies to plead his cause before Innocent himself. It was done gravely and formally, the murder of Arthur being the principal topic of accusation, and Louis's advocates maintaining what the Pope denied, the right of vassals to summon their lord into court, when charged with heinous crimes, and to depose him for non-appearance. Before judgment was given, the news arrived that Louis had landed in England with an invading army, and Innocent felt that he was at once defied and insulted. He summoned his clergy, and addressed to them a discourse, beginning with the text (Ezek. xxi. 9, 10): "*A sword is sharpened, and also furbished: it is sharpened to make a sure slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter;*" and in the midst of it proclaimed the Dauphin and all his adherents excommunicated. The crown of England, however, for himself, in addition to Normandy already

wrested from John and added to his patrimony, was too dazzling a prize for Louis to forego ; and he prosecuted the war in England, while the legate, who had hastened from Lyons, and was doing his utmost to sustain the King's sinking cause, thundered forth his anathemas against the insurgent barons and their French allies. The contest was undecided ; three armies were wasting our poor land ; John was no nearer to repentance for his crimes ; his revolted subjects fought on, dreading his restoration to power more than the maledictions of the Pope ; Louis was pressing the siege of Dover, hoping, at any rate, to secure a stronghold on English soil,—when the death of Innocent made a mighty change in European politics ; and the same year, 1216, saw the close of John's ignominious reign and wretched life.

Chronological order, in a sketch like ours, when a life such as Innocent's is our subject, is hardly possible. He was the ruling spirit in so many places at once that a brief narrative, following the order of time, would be strangely incoherent and disjointed. We have found it easier and safer to carry the reader to Germany, England, and France, in turn,—the stream of events in each country sometimes running in separate channels, sometimes intermingling with contemporaneous history elsewhere. We have seen something of the relations between Innocent and the great Potentates of Europe. But we shall greatly underrate the amount of his labours, and imagine a sphere of influence far

more limited than the reality, if we leave out of account what was done in less powerful kingdoms. His eagle glance seemed to be every where at once. The most obscure were not overlooked; the most distant were to hear the all-commanding voice. In the first of the nineteen books, answering to the nineteen years of his pontificate, which contain his published correspondence, we find letters addressed to the Courts of Portugal, and Norway, and Hungary, besides an earnest exhortation to unity addressed to the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the Emperor Alexis III. The mighty work grew as years went on. Higher and higher he seemed to mount, like one who desired to see the whole habitable globe within his range of view, and to reach, with his missives at least, men living at its furthest extremities. A complete collection of the despatches, which travelled from Rome through Europe and Asia, it is calculated, would contain *four thousand* at least; and a wonderful medley they make, written to all sorts of persons, about all sorts of things. Wars and truces among princes,—to say nothing of royal marriages and divorces,—the multifarious business of monasteries and dioceses,—elections to be confirmed or annulled,—quarrels to be settled on the undefined boundary,—lines of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction,—refractory laymen exhorted to submission, and timid churchmen fortified by weapons from the papal armoury,—matters of state policy reviewed in their bearing on the Church's interests, and the privacies of domestic life laid open to the

searching gaze of the Supreme Court of Appeal,—warriors to be stirred up to deeds of valour against infidels or heretics by the hope of heavenly rewards,—all these, in succession, and twenty more, are the topics which fill the volumes we speak of; and beneath the weight of such a burden the active spirit never flagged or fainted till the writer was far advanced in middle life. We are sure that, when God divided the human family into distinct nations, He never meant them all to be subject to a central government; but, certainly, all that could be done by force of intellect and will, combined with almost superhuman industry, to bend rival powers to the sway of One presiding authority, was accomplished by Innocent in those strange opening years of the thirteenth century. The self-multiplying energy, which enabled him at once to survey and rule his wide domain, made him a wonder to his own age; and amid princes of no mean capacity we find him vindicating his claims to pre-eminence, not merely by arrogant assertions, but by intellectual power and administrative skill which sustained his highest pretensions.

We have said already that, throughout all the years of Innocent's Pontificate, he never ceased to long and scheme for a new Crusade. Europe was nearer than Asia; Christian monarchs, with their quarrels and crimes, gave him many busy hours and anxious thoughts: but to the ground once trodden by the feet of the Son of God his imagination resorted again and again as the field of enter-

prize which should be dearer to Christian hearts than all the scenes in which brave warriors or ambitious princes were struggling for the mastery. The concluding years of the twelfth century were a time of disaster to the armies of the Faithful. Jaffa had been retaken by the Saracens, its walls razed to the ground, and its garrison put to the sword. The fortresses, which remained in the hands of the Christians, became hiding-places for the poor remnant of a mighty host, while reverses, which made lamentation throughout Christendom, did not restrain the champions of the Cross from violent dissensions and the grossest profligacy. A pope of less fervid imagination, or less resolute will, might have given up the cause for lost. In vain Europe seemed to pour forth army upon army; they melted away or gained barren conquests; among survivors some settled on the sacred soil, and copied the infidel instead of showing him a more excellent way; while others came back impoverished or enriched, as the case might be, but certainly not improved in morals, nor more deeply rooted in the faith. Defeats and disgraces were felt by Innocent as a personal calamity; he longed to see Christendom once more united under the Holy Banner; and bent his most zealous efforts towards pacification in Europe, that all obstacles might be removed to a simultaneous invasion of the East.

At the very commencement of his reign we see the first fruits of his crusading zeal. To the archbishops and bishops of France he commends a



cardinal whom he had himself invested with the Cross, and sent to make peace between the Kings of France and England, that their quarrels may not hinder the work of God. "For myself," he writes, "the necessities of the Church keep me at my post, and none of my predecessors have thought fit to encounter the labour of a journey to Jerusalem; but over and above my common anxieties, including *that which cometh upon me daily—the care of all the Churches*—another sore burden is laid upon me since I heard the tidings of Jaffa captured by the enemy, German knights returning to their homes, and the Saracens swarming like locusts over the land that was ours till lately. Indeed, so heavily am I pressed that, if all other business were laid aside, this alone would be more than enough for my feeble powers." To Philip Augustus, at the same time, he writes in a similar strain, recounting the losses in the East, and charging upon him and his rival, the King of England, the guilt of detaining gallant men at home to fill their armies, who would gladly fight the Lord's battles if they were set at liberty. Men of rank and influence, who had been in disgrace, are specially exhorted to wipe out the memory of their evil deeds, and to begin a life of piety by contributing their aid to the good cause. Raymond, Count of Toulouse, of whom we shall hear in a future stage of our narrative, had been excommunicated by Pope Celestine, and afterwards reconciled to the Church. Now, "being brought out of darkness into light," he is charged to "make

full reparation for faults both many and great, and so to conduct himself as a soldier of the Cross, that the splendour of his virtues may be more than a set-off against past infamy." On these conditions promises of future bliss are written down which do not bargain for repentance, though we may charitably conclude that they presuppose it. At any rate, coming from the head of Christendom, and addressed to a man notoriously wicked, they must have been awfully blinding.\* Another count is told in plain words that "if he had his deserts, God would collect the lightnings of His wrath, and sweep him from the face of the earth. But in mercy he has been spared that he might become as a wall of defence for Israel. Wherefore let him shake from his neck the yoke of *the roaring lion who seeketh whom he may devour*, and put on the armour of God, lest he should be reckoned with as a traitor to his Lord, according to the saying in the gospel, *He that is not with Me is against Me*."†

\* "Ut igitur, præter divinam gratiam, peccatorum tuorum veniam et Apostolicæ protectionis præsidium, quæ in suis expensis proficiscentibus indulgemus, et augmentum æternæ coronæ, quod insuper pollicemur, a Domino merearis, rogamus nobilitatem tuam, monemus et hortamur in Domino, et in remissionem injungimus peccatorum, quatenus signum vivificæ Crucis assumes, et in satisfactionem criminum quæ hactenus commisisti ad partes transeas transmarinas, ubi funiculum hæreditatis Christi et jura populi Christiani defendas, et impugnes barbariem Paganorum."—*Innocentii III., Epistolarum*, Lib. III. 397.

† *Ad Gulielmum Comitem Forealieaviensem*.—*Innocentii Epistolarum*, Lib. I. 407.

We will give one more specimen from letters which would make a volume by themselves. The topics are those which proved strangely successful in drawing men's hearts in one direction till the crusading spirit quite died out. To us the personification which adorns these pictures seems a childish figure of speech—so imperfect is the analogy between the imprisoned Saviour and the soil of Palestine trodden under foot of strangers. Well would it have been for Christendom if the far higher truth had been recognised, that Christ lives in His members, and that poor saints any where, oppressed by power (pious heretics inclusive), are the afflicted ones with whom His true disciples should sympathise. We give the opening sentences of a letter addressed in the beginning of the year 1200, *To all the faithful of the province of Vienne* :—

“ We call to mind what the Lord has spoken by His prophet, *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet*. We know, too, that to us is committed the oversight of the flock of Christ, and that an Apostle has said, *Be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort*. Wherefore we must not cease to cry, though hitherto our trumpet has given no uncertain sound when we summoned Christians to the relief of the Holy Land ; and few, alas ! have been roused to fight the battles of the Lord. *Now* the case is more urgent than ever, and there is better hope that succours will prove of essential service. We cry, then, to you, and our cry is on behalf of Him who Himself was *made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, that He might deliver you from eternal death ; and who also has said what all should hear, *If any*

*man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.* We have received letters from the patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem, and from many others, which inform us of the troubles and dangers of our brethren in the Holy Land; and specially we learn that hitherto God in His mercy has made the quarrels of the Saracens the means of safety to the province; but now there is a talk of peace; and it is feared that, if the enemy shall become united before fresh forces shall arrive, then the unconquered portion will be easily overrun. We charge you, therefore, and exhort you in the Lord, one and all, for the remission of your sins, to ponder in your minds the coming woe—the woe, I may say, of the Crucified Himself. Let those who can fight for God take the holy sign, and begin their march; and let others, who are unfit for the field, enlist soldiers on their behalf and at their expense, each man according to his ability; and let no man stand aloof, and say he will not cheerfully contribute his mite, at least, to the good cause, unless he means to forego his share of the inheritance of the saints—according to that word, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy Angels.*” For, consider, I pray you; if an earthly sovereign were a prisoner, and his vassals did not sacrifice life and property to restore him to freedom, what would he do when the time of enlargement came, and he sat in judgment upon their offence? Would he not deem them false and damnable traitors? Would he not invent new modes of torture to destroy them, and transfer all their possessions to loyal subjects? In like manner, will not Jesus Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, who gave soul and body for us, and bought us with precious blood, condemn you as ungrateful, false-hearted traitors, if you shall refuse to come to His help, now that He is banished from His own land, and shut up, as it were, in a prison built out of the wood of the Cross itself.”

Then follows a charge to archbishops and bishops,

abbots and priors, deans and archdeacons, to contribute a *fortieth* of their ecclesiastical revenues—special orders being given that every church should be provided with a box, into which the congregation were to be exhorted to pour their offerings “for the remission of their sins.” Spiritual persons are told they may commute penances for gifts to the Holy War, due regard being had to the condition and circumstances of the offender.

Innocent's zeal seems to have met with small response from bishops or princes. A century of disappointment had done its work, and remonstrances like those which we have quoted, though written with a glowing pen, and coming from the head of the Church, failed to kindle a new frenzy throughout Europe. Far more effective than all the Pope's eloquence on paper were the burning words of a man who seems to have combined the fervour of Peter the Hermit with higher qualifications and nobler aims—Foulques of Neuilly. *Righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*, had been his favourite topics before he began to preach the duty of arming against the infidel; and as a moral censor, who assailed the prevalent dissoluteness of manners with uncompromising boldness, sparing none and fearing none, he had gained the popular ear, and become famous in Paris and elsewhere. Nobles and priests alike fell under his lash, and even royalty did not pass uncensured; for it was his plain-spoken rebuke of Richard of England which provoked the monarch's famous retort at the expense of templars,

monks, and bishops.\* Suddenly his zeal was turned into a new channel, and earnest exhortations to repentance and a holy life were superseded by impassioned appeals about the debt due from every Christian man to the land in which the work of redemption had been accomplished. His zeal kindled with this exciting subject; his travels embraced a wider circuit; armed with a commission from Innocent himself, he traversed Normandy, Brittany, and Burgundy; crowds flocked to him from every quarter, whose tears and prayers recalled the days when Europe had responded to the call of Urban II., and the men who had received the Cross at his hands were soon numbered by tens of thousands. In the course of the year 1199, he found his way to a tournament in Champagne, at which were gathered the flower of English, French, and German chivalry; and the jousts were suspended, and knights and spectators were content to listen in breathless silence, while Foulques descanted on the glory of fighting for Christ, instead of shivering lances and risking life or limb for the honour of their dames. Thibault, Count of Champagne, the feudal lord of

\* En 1198 il avait prêché devant Richard Cœur-de-Lion, et il l'avait exhorté à se défaire au plus tôt de ses trois méchantes filles, la superbe, la cupidité et la luxure; et Richard, qui n'avait pas beaucoup de confiance en sa bonne foi, répondit en présence de tous ses barons, 'Eh bien, pour me conformer aux vœux de cet hypocrite, je donnerai mes trois filles en mariage, la superbe aux Templiers, la cupidité aux moines de Citeaux, et la luxure aux Prélats de mes Eglises.' "—*Sismondi Histoire des Français IV.* 207.

eighteen hundred knights, and many others of distinguished name and extensive influence, were the spoil of that single day; and when the preacher's words and their results were reported in Flanders, numbers more caught the infection, with Count Baldwin at their head. Events seemed to be fast hastening to the crisis for which Innocent had laboured so earnestly; but still amid the bustle of preparation his commanding voice was heard, offering new inducements, or repeating the old remonstrances, while laymen were squandering in luxury what he claimed for the support of the crusading army, and even churchmen showed little willingness to tax themselves according to his bidding. Not only were the men who had pledged themselves to the Holy War put under stringent sumptuary laws, being charged to content themselves with two dishes at a meal, and to eschew the softness of the ermine in articles of dress, but for five whole years, while brave men were wanted to fight in earnest, the mimic war was forbidden, and knights were charged, under pain of excommunication, not to waste their skill on tournaments. Bishops were lectured in a style which had better have been reserved for more flagrant offences than lukewarmness in the cause to which the Pope himself was so passionately devoted:—"The men of Nineveh," he writes, "will rise up in judgment against you and the clergy of France. They repented at the preaching of Jonas; but you stand still while insults are heaped upon your Lord. Behold Him scourged,

and buffeted, and crucified. Hear His enemies assailing Him with the taunting cry, *If Thou be the Son of God, save Thyself*. My heart bleeds while I utter words like these. You have not given the cup of cold water to him who asked it; and even the laity, to whom you should have preached obedience, reproach you as laying burdens on their shoulders which you will not touch with one of your fingers. In truth you are prodigal enough sometimes; money can be spared for jongleuors, and hawks, and hounds, but you are niggards when the Lord is to be served with that which is His own."

The time came when provision was to be made for the conveyance of another army of volunteers to the Holy Land. The Venetians were to be the carriers, and with the famous Doge Dandolo, then past ninety, for negotiator, were careful to make a good bargain. When the Crusaders mustered there, in the spring of 1202, it was found that among them all they could not make up the sum which had been agreed upon as the price for transporting 4500 knights, with their horses, and squires, and foot soldiers, amounting to 20,000 men. Fifty thousand marks only were forthcoming out of the stipulated eighty-five thousand; the commercial republic was by no means inclined to accept lower terms; the leaders were jealous of any stain upon their honour, the season was gliding away, and the expedition at a stand, when a strange proposition, strangely accepted, removed the difficulty. The city of Zara,



on the eastern side of the Adriatic, had revolted from the Venetians, and put itself under the protection of the King of Hungary. "Help us to reconquer it," said the Doge, "and the debt shall be cancelled. For the sum already advanced we will send you on your way when our banner floats once more on the walls of the captured city." In vain loyal Crusaders remonstrated against this new scheme of turning their arms for hire against a Christian prince; in vain was a cardinal sent by Innocent, and armed with a threat of excommunication against all who should thus disgrace the cause to which they were pledged. The old doge would have no spiritual advisers in his council of war, so the legate received for answer that, as a religious teacher, he might accompany the army, if it so pleased him, but in no other character was his assistance required. So to Zara went the host that was bound for Jerusalem,—forty thousand men, in nearly five hundred vessels,—and on the fifth day of the siege the rebellious city capitulated. *Whither next; and when?* was the question. December was near at hand—another spring must be waited for. So the Crusaders and their Venetian allies divided the town between them, and presently began to quarrel and fight about the best quarters. No wonder that Innocent vented his disappointment in letters of remonstrance and rebuke. During the four years of his pontificate he had been labouring to compose feuds among Christian princes, and to kindle the old crusading spirit among their subjects, that he might

muster an army like those which, at the bidding of three former popes, had been sent against the Mussulmen spoilers of Palestine. The forces were gathered, the leaders were appointed;—less numerous than on former occasions, the new levies might profit by past mistakes, and prove a more united and better-disciplined host; and now all his fond hopes seemed wrecked and sunk on the shores of the Adriatic. The first city taken was a Christian city—the besieged, in their extremity, had hung crosses on their walls, and the holy sign was disregarded. The King of Hungary himself was a Crusader, and yet his comrades, breaking the bond of brotherhood, had dared to storm and occupy his city. So Innocent wrote, in his wrath, to the army collectively, and to the French nobles specially by name, and both letters ran into the scolding tone which is not uncommon in these missives when his will is crossed, or his authority is slighted:—"You have put your hand to the plough, and have turned back; verily, the silver is tarnished, and the gold is turned to dross. Like escaped prisoners you should have hasted straightway to the land flowing with milk and honey, but you have turned back in heart to the flesh-pots of Egypt, and (worse than they who craved the leeks and cucumbers in olden times) you have thirsted for the blood of your brethren. Of a truth the old serpent has gone craftily to work. He could not reach the head, and, therefore, with malice and subtlety, as is his wont, he has been lying in ambush to bite, as it were, at the hoofs of your

horses, and so procure the overthrow of the riders. Yea, knowing full well that, *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*, the seducer of mankind has sought to extinguish this grace in you, and rob you of your reward. It is he who has moved you to war against the faithful, and thereby you have made over to him, as it were, the first fruits of your pilgrimage, and poured out your brethren's blood and your own as an offering to devils."

Such was the Pope's message to the army generally. That which he addressed to the French captains was in a similar strain of invective:—"They had left their homes in the character of soldiers of Christ, but had turned aside, and become hired champions of Satan;" "instead of going up from Egypt to Jerusalem, they had gone down from Jerusalem to Egypt;" "they had looked back, like Lot's wife, and, like her, had become a pillar of salt—not salt which was sprinkled upon the sacrifice, but that of which the Lord had said, *If the salt have lost his savour wherewith shall it be salted?*" Restitution is enjoined, the spoil of Zara must all be given back to the plundered citizens. Next, they must sue for pardon to the King of Hungary. Lastly, before the cardinal legate deputed to receive their submission they must bind themselves and their successors, by solemn oath, to do their best to make satisfaction for this act of presumption, and specially to abstain from all hostile acts against Christian men, except for such reasons

as the Apostolic See might sanction. In such imperial terms did the self-elected commander-in-chief announce his pleasure. On these conditions, and no others, they might be absolved, and released from the penalties of excommunication.

*Whither next?* was the question once again ; and now the Crusaders were tempted to another deviation from the straight road to Palestine. Alexius III. reigned at Constantinople, having dethroned his brother Isaac ; and the young Alexius, Isaac's son, came as a suitor to Zara, beseeching the Crusaders to march to the imperial city, and punish the usurper. The young prince hoped to rally his party, and win a crown. Large promises were made if the expedition should prove successful. "Let me be emperor," he said, "and you shall reap a rich reward. Provisions for your army shall be supplied in abundance, and a subsidy of 200,000 marks. Moreover, 10,000 men to be maintained at my expense for a year, and 500 lances to serve for life in the Holy Land, shall be my contribution to the good cause, or if you prefer to accept my personal service, I will take the cross, and share the glory of your conquests." Provisions and money were always a tempting bribe to soldiers whose faces were towards Jerusalem, for both commonly ran short. If the overtures were rejected, there was the choice of Syria or Egypt for the next stage, and to settle a route was always a point of difficulty amidst a multitude of advisers ; the capture of Constantinople in the interest of an injured prince was

a romantic adventure which would have a special charm for many ; while wanderers of roving habits, and unsettled principles (no small proportion of a crusading host), would surely look with favour on a project which offered them a sight of the far-famed capital of the East. So Innocent remonstrated again to no purpose. "What is it to you," he said, "that the Emperor seized his brother's throne, and put out his eyes? You have no commission to punish him, and you have other work to do. Take care that you are not cheated by a show of justice and humanity, and led to a course which may prove ruinous to your souls. Put aside all frivolous pretences, all pleas of apparent necessity, pass on to avenge the injuries of the Cross; and then the enemy will yield the spoil which you may have to extort from brethren if you linger on your way." Against the remonstrances of the Churchmen who were most loyal to the Pope—Dandolo and the Venetian being the most eager partisans of Alexius—the critical resolve was taken; and on the 23rd of June, 1203, the city strangely described by one historian as "equal to Rome in dignity, to *Jerusalem* in sanctity, to Babylon in magnitude," burst on the eyes of European invaders, with its unequalled site, its ample walls, and countless domes and towers, making a vision of glory such as their eyes had never beheld in any of the capitals of the West.

Innocent is our subject, and the particulars of the siege, which was undertaken in spite of his com-

mands and threats, do not belong to our narrative. In a few weeks the Crusaders had taken Constantinople, and Alexius IV. was Emperor. Then came fierce quarrels within and without the city, the poor puppet of a sovereign being unable to please his Greek subjects and his Latin masters. A revolution ended in his murder; and his successor could ill brook the presence of the Venetian fleet in his waters, and an army, still counted by tens of thousands, encamped beneath his walls. The Holy Land was well-nigh forgotten by this time, and a richer prize, close at hand, tempted the ambition, the cupidity, and the indolence of the intruding army. Hostilities could not long be averted. The conflict ensued which is described in some of Gibbon's most eloquent pages; the mailed warriors of the West won the victory against a feebler race, and a divided empire; and in the spring of 1204, Baldwin, Count of Flanders, was raised, by the vote of his brother-princes, to the throne of Constantine.

Innocent's expostulation had been set at nought; but it must not be supposed that he had no interest in the momentous events of which Constantinople was the scene. There was something dearer to him than all the spoils of the East, however employed or however won. The Church's unity,—extended jurisdiction for the Apostolic See,—the subordination of the Patriarch of Constantinople to the Papacy, even as all the Primates of Europe yielded willing homage,—these were the objects which kindled his hopes when the startling intelli-

gence was carried to Rome. Alexius, during his brief term of prosperity, had written to the Pope, apologetically for his allies, and humbly and courteously for himself, saying that they had been drawn aside from their intended route mainly by the hope of putting an end to schism between the Eastern and Western Churches, and promising that efforts should not be wanting on his part to bring about this result. Innocent's reply combined the haughty self-assumption of the Church, which claimed all Christendom for itself, with words of exhortation and encouragement as from a father to a well-meaning and hopeful child,—“We rejoice greatly that the Almighty Ruler has touched your heart, and inclined it to pious resolves, so that you desire to see the Church of Constantinople rendering back to the Apostolic See, as the daughter to the mother, the long-delayed debt of reverent obedience. When you were an exile and sought our presence, you bound yourself by oath to yield to us all dutiful submission (even as Catholic emperors before you are known to have been devoted in ancient times to our predecessors, the orthodox Pontiffs of Rome), promising at the same time that, when opportunity should be given, effectual measures should be taken, yet prudently withheld, to bring the Eastern Church to a like temper. See that these promises are made good by corresponding deeds. So shall your kingdom flourish under divine protection, and the Apostolic See will contribute its aid to the uttermost for your safety and advancement.” Then

follow, in true papal style, phrases of lofty import as to the far-reaching sway of Rome, along with lowly-sounding professions culled from the Holy Scriptures ;—" Seeing that, next to God, the Latin chiefs have won back your kingdom, you may well honour the Roman Church whose sons stood by you so valiantly, and which still, next to God, may be your empire's best defender. This we say not in the spirit of ambition, as lusting for rule, but because our office binds us to minister, as we can, to your necessities ; after the example of Him who came, *not to be ministered unto, but to minister, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock* ; for the Scripture saith again, *The Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors ; but ye shall not be so ; but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve.*"

We have seen already that the Pope gave no countenance to the bargain with young Alexius. All was done in defiance of his threats and censures ; but, at any rate, the crusading host had not turned aside for nothing ; they were masters of the city which had never yet owned allegiance to the Roman See ; and, as one who claimed jurisdiction wherever men named the Name of Christ, it was his business to turn the occasion to profit. So no time was lost. It was thought right for a Latin emperor of Constantinople to have a Latin patriarch, and straight-



way one, whom the Venetians had thought fit to nominate, was approved and despatched from Rome. The Greek patriarch had fled with the dethroned emperor, and a constitution was given to the Church he had left, and services were appointed, and Canons of St. Sophia were installed, as if Christianity were a new thing in the Eastern empire. Even the Latin ritual, in the first instance, was to be forced upon the conquered race, and Latin ecclesiastics were to serve at the altars. After an obstinate contest, some points were yielded; and a modicum of toleration was granted; the patriarch being permitted to relax the rule in places where the population was entirely Greek, and the ancient ritual being continued till further orders, whenever the worshippers had fought stoutly for it, and refused to yield. An ample share of the spoil, too, was claimed by the Church, and in this matter the Pope's orders were absolute, and implicitly obeyed. *One fifteenth* of all lands and houses was to be appropriated to them; and if the owners were willing to give a tithe of their produce besides, the clergy might receive it.

Externally, a good deal was done to make the two Churches one. The trophies of victory surmounted the very altars, and men could not worship in their own temples without being reminded of their humiliation. But the amalgamating process went on but slowly. The Greeks held to their ancient faith as to the procession of the Holy Ghost; the Latin Breviary was a hated intruder into con-

gregations which had prayed hitherto in the language of Homer and Plato; the Pope himself could command little veneration, when represented by victorious and unscrupulous soldiers. For, in very deed, the Latins gave little proof of having a purer faith, or belonging to a more orthodox Church. Their licence in the sack of the city is unfavourably contrasted by Christian historians with the moderation of Mussulmen conquerors, when Jerusalem was at their mercy; and from a letter of Innocent's we learn, that the open violation of nuns and matrons was added to wholesale plunder and sacrilege by those who carried the holy sign on their banners. Other outrages were added which completed the disgust of the citizens. Precious works of art, on which the old Greek heroes had gazed, were defaced or destroyed; and churches were broken open, and despoiled of relics for which monarchs would have given gold—the new emperor laying claim to a traditional crown of thorns, and Dandolo appropriating to himself what passed for a portion of the true Cross—the same which Constantine always carried with him into battle. While these things were acted before their eyes, Innocent preached in vain about the blessings of unity; and the Greeks, at once oppressed and insulted, clung all the closer in heart to their ancient creed.

## WICLIF.

THE period of Wiclif's life corresponds very nearly with the reign of Edward III., which occupies half a century of English history. He was born three years before the great King succeeded his murdered father; and he lived seven years into the reign of the feeble and unfortunate Richard II. History records nothing respecting his parentage; and his own writings give no clue to the place of his birth, or to the class from which he sprang. Dr. Vaughan, on rather scanty evidence, assumes positively that he was of gentle birth, and belonged to a family which, up to the beginning of the seventeenth century, ranked as lords of the manor of Wickliff, or Wycliffe, near Richmond in Yorkshire. No doubt rests on the place of his education. He was trained in the schools of Oxford, and was successively a student at Queen's College, a Fellow of Merton, and Warden of Balliol. In the learning of the times he became no mean proficient. Knighton, the well-known chronicler, a Canon of Leicester, and a contemporary of Wiclif, who deemed him an arrant heretic and mischief-maker, admits that he "was pre-eminent in theological acquirements, unsurpassed in philosophy, and in scholastic exercises indisputably

the first man of his time." Happily, he was something better than all this, and became distinguished, in early days, as a diligent student of Holy Scripture. Aristotle was not his master, though he knew all that the Greek philosopher had written; nor did he put the *Book of Sentences* above the Gospels, like many of his contemporaries, to whom Peter Lombard was like the voice of an oracle; but he drank in wisdom from the fountain-head, and won a nobler title than any that was bestowed on the greatest teachers of the day by their most devoted followers—that of the *Evangelic Doctor*.

We learn that he was successively Rector of Fillingham, in Lincolnshire, and of Ludgershall, in Buckinghamshire; but Oxford was not deserted. By the time he had reached middle life, it is evident that he had become known as a man of courage and ability, pledged to opinions very different from those which were popular among Churchmen. For, at a critical period of our history, when a champion was wanted to plead for the rights of Englishmen against the Pope, Wiclif was called forth, and answered to the summons. In the year 1365, Urban V. claimed the arrears of tribute due from the English Crown to the Roman See, under the treaty which King John had been base enough to make with Innocent III. For thirty years it had been unpaid; and now from the gallant and high-spirited Edward, strong at home and victorious abroad, a weak pontiff had the hardihood to claim thirty thousand marks. The King appealed to Parliament, and Parliament gave

for answer, that “neither King John, nor any other king, could bring this realm in such thralldom and subjection, but by common consent of Parliament, which was not done; therefore, that which he did was against his oath at his coronation.” Magna Charta was now a hundred and fifty years old; Lords and Commons were growing powers in the State; and if the King had been a miserable, time-serving poltroon, like his predecessor, he would have found sturdy remonstrants among his barons. Happily, all parties were of one mind, and the claim was not enforced or repeated; but the Pope had an army of loyal subjects scattered over the land, to whom their country’s honour was a small matter, as compared with the Church’s power and wealth; and one among them, a monk of unknown name, put the matter into the form of a syllogism, and having proved, to his own satisfaction, that, in default of payment of the stipulated sum, King Edward had fallen from the sovereignty of England, straightway proclaimed his treasonable conclusion to as many as could read Latin, and challenged Wiclif by name to refute what he had written. Wiclif undertook the task, and discharged it right loyally, as an honest divine and a true lover of his country.

The reply has a special interest about it, as the earliest of his undoubted works which has come down to us; but it is curious on other grounds. Having opened the subject, and stated his adversary’s argument, the writer introduces some disputants on the opposite side, with the following preface: “I

ask my reverend doctor to refute, if he can, what I have heard has been delivered on this subject in a certain council of secular lords." Then follows a discussion, in the course of which seven speakers deliver themselves. The argument, somewhat abridged, stands as follows:—

*First Lord* ("in armis plus strenuus"). "The kingdom of England was won by the sword, and has been so kept. The tribute, which was forcibly extorted by Julius Cæsar, was withheld as the kingdom grew in strength, and with good reason, as no wrong should last for ever. The same principle applies to this payment, formerly made to the Pope of Rome. Wherefore my advice is that it be refused, unless the Pope can take it with a strong hand; and if he shall attempt to do so, then, I say, it will be our right and duty to resist him."

*Second Lord*. "The Pope, of all men, ought to be a follower of Christ; but Christ coveted no share in the civil government, and consequently the Pope ought not. For in St. Matthew we read what Christ said to the man who promised to follow Him, having his eye on worldly gain, that *the Son of man had not where to lay His head*. Since, therefore, it is our duty to hold the Pope to the observance of his own religion, it is clear that we are bound to resist him when he requires us to fulfil a condition which is purely civil."

*Third Lord*. "It seemeth to me that, as regards the principle and reason of the thing, we may retort upon the Pope. For is he not *the servant of*

*the servants of God?* And ought he, therefore, to receive tribute from England except for service done? Since, therefore, he does not impart strength or safety to this realm, but purloins its wealth, and assists our enemies by sending them money, and giving them counsel, it is plain that we ought in prudence to resist the claim which is now brought forward. And as to the assumption of service rendered, we have ample experience of the failures of pope and cardinals, both in temporal and spiritual matters."

The *fourth* speaker founds an ingenious argument on the feudal principle of vassalage, and says that, as a third part of the lands of the kingdom is held in some sort by the Pope, and yet, when there is a change of occupants, neither he nor his tenants do homage for them to the King, he has really forfeited possession, and, if the rights of both parties come to be settled, is himself the defaulter. A *fifth* argued that if John undertook to pay tribute to the Pope, it must have been for some boon; for no such gift in perpetuity could ever have been granted simply in the way of alms. Was the boon absolution for himself, or the withdrawal of the interdict for his people? Then the contract was simoniacal; and, as good Christians, they must undo what had been so dishonestly done. Or was the tribute meant for compensation when the Crown was restored to the King after forfeiture? Then it seems the Pope may, at any time, on some pretence, good or bad, disinherit the King of England, and put in his place some

creature of his own. "Who, let me ask, shall resist such pretensions, at the outset, if we stand still?" "Yes," said a *sixth*, "let us resist at the outset;" and then, taking high ground, he argued that Christ was the chief proprietor of all things, whereas the Pope might fall into mortal sin, and so lose all right and claim both to rule, and hold possessions of any sort. It was enough, therefore, in his judgment, that they should give their allegiance to one lord, the King; and as for their goods, let them be shared virtuously with the poor; and so let the kingdom be held, now as in former times, immediately from Christ, who, as the one liege Lord, would assign to mortal men whatever He pleased of earthly dominion. A *seventh* lord had yet to be heard, and he took the plain, matter-of-fact view of the question, that John was a wicked man and a faithless king; that his golden seal, affixed to a document like that which was quoted, could not bind his subjects; the compact, therefore, was null and void, as no loyal consent had ever been given.

If this is really a portion of what was spoken in the House of Lords, in that distant age, on a subject so full of interest to Protestant Englishmen, we must reckon it a choice morsel happily preserved from oblivion, and may rejoice that Wiclif, in addition to other claims on our gratitude, turned parliamentary reporter. Possibly, the speakers are fictitious personages, and Wiclif has written down what, in his judgment, English barons ought to have spoken. In either case, it is pleasant to read such outspoken



declarations of independence a century and a half before the Reformation.

It was for the honour of England that all the world should understand her monarchs were not vassals of the Pope. It was also for the interest and happiness of England that the great offices of state should not be held exclusively by churchmen, who were largely under papal influence. This point was raised in the course of Edward's reign, and again we find Parliament taking the manly course, and Wiclif siding with the Parliament. In the year 1371 a petition was presented to the King, praying that the ancient practice might be checked, and that spiritual persons might be debarred from specified places of trust and honour. As it was, they presided in the courts; they had the care of the public treasure; they undertook the business of surveyors and architects; they did not disdain to serve about the royal wardrobe and in the royal kitchen. John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, a younger son of Edward III., a man of large possessions, extensive influence, and a political reformer to boot, has the reputation of heading or assisting this anti-clerical movement; and in this matter, as in others of the like kind, we find Wiclif by his side. He did not disguise the evil, nor spare the men. Using the plainest language, and respecting no man's person, he denounced the practice as dishonouring the priesthood, and robbing the people of their pastors. He had before him a high standard of duty for those who were pledged to a holy calling, and claimed

them as truants from God's service when they descended to meaner occupations. One of his many practical works, dealing plainly with men's consciences, and setting before them common duties, is entitled, *A Short Rule of Life, for each man in general, and for priests, lords, and labourers in particular, how each shall be saved in his degree*; and there we find these homely sentences,—the text, as it were, of a hundred sermons which he preached to the luxurious churchmen of those evil times, before his work was done: “If thou art a priest, and hast the cure of souls, live thou a holy life. Pass other men in holy prayers, holy desires, and holy speaking; in counselling and teaching the truth. Keep the commandments of God, and let His Gospel and His praises be ever in thy mouth. Ever despise sin, that men may be drawn therefrom, and that thy deeds may be so far rightful that no man shall blame them with reason. Let thy open lips be thus a true book, in which the soldier and the layman may learn how to serve God, and keep His commandments. For the example of a good life, if it be open and continued, striketh rude men much more than open preaching with the Word alone. And waste not thy goods in great feasts for rich men, but live a frugal life on poor men's alms and goods. Have both meat, and drink, and clothing; but the remnant give truly to the poor, to those who have freely wrought, but who may not labour from feebleness and sickness; and thus thou shalt be a true priest to God and man.”

In 1372 we find Wiclif at Oxford, a Doctor of Divinity, and entitled in that character to give lectures on theology to those who chose to be his hearers. Of how many his class consisted, or what impression was produced on young, inquiring minds by teaching widely different from most that was heard in the schools, we cannot tell. But it is highly probable that in those days much seed was sown which issued in a harvest of what men called Lollardism a few years later. The substance of some of his lectures is contained in a work which has come down to us, called *Triologus*, being an argument cast into the form of a controversial discussion, in which *Truth*, *Falsehood*, and *Wisdom* are the speakers. Much of it is in the dry, scholastic style which was then thought necessary in all treatises intended for the learned. In some parts, hard questions are propounded which human wit cannot solve, and the answers are little conclusive or profitable. But, buried in disquisitions which are wearisome to a modern reader, we find some gems of precious truth, respecting great moral questions, which shine out amid surrounding darkness, and show how boldly he could differ from what was authoritatively taught both at Rome and Oxford. Respecting mortal and venial sins, for instance, about which priests “bab- bled” in the confessional and elsewhere—respecting men who “by granting indulgences blasphemed the wisdom of God,” and “chattered on the subject of grace, as if it were something to be bought and sold like an ox or an ass”—respecting saint-worship, and

the sole mediatorship of Christ—respecting the authority of Scripture as paramount above “the laws of the papacy, and the opinions of modern doctors—he spoke out as our boldest reformers did in later days; nor does he spare “Cæsarean Prelates,” and “Satraps of this world,” against whom the soldiers of Christ must be prepared to stand up even unto death.

Wiclif, however, was soon called to widely different scenes. Parliament was bestirring itself on the subject of papal rapacity, and complaining that English wealth was devoured, and the King’s subjects were defrauded by the tribute levied, under various pretences, on ecclesiastical revenues. First-fruits paid on consecration and institution, with *provisions*, or reserved presentations to bishoprics and benefices, in derogation of the crown, and other lawful patrons—these, and other modes of exaction, had grown into a system which seemed to be rooted in the soil, and bore bitter fruit in the shape of neglected duties, open scandal, and muttered resentments, or outspoken indignation, against the foreign plunderers. The burden had become too heavy to be borne; and, in the later years of Edward III., voices were heard in the great council of the nation which were but the echo of complaints uttered in every county. Thus the indictment runs in the records of the memorable session of 1376:—That the tax paid to the Pope of Rome for ecclesiastical dignities amounted to five times as much as was paid yearly to the King from the whole produce of

the realm ; that, in case of a translation or death, a single bishopric or dignity was sometimes made to yield him profit, in some shape, three, four, and five times over ; that, for money paid to his “brokers,” many aliens and enemies were presented to livings worth a thousand marks yearly, “caitiffs, who never saw their parishioners, nor ever cared to see them, being altogether unlearned and unworthy, and worse than Jews and Saracens—whereas learned and worthy men could hardly get twenty marks ;” and lay patrons, “perceiving this simony and covetousness of the Pope, did learn to sell their benefices to beasts, no otherwise than Christ was sold to the Jews.” Specific facts were alleged to justify these charges ; one cardinal, say the remonstrants, is Dean of York, another Dean of Salisbury, another Dean of Lincoln, another Archdeacon of Canterbury, another Archdeacon of Durham, another Archdeacon of Suffolk, another Archdeacon of York ; and not content with reaping spoil for their own use, money, it is added, is transported from the realm to its hurt and disparagement—the Pope first levying a subsidy of the whole clergy of England, and then “ransoming Frenchmen, the King’s enemies, with it, who defend Lombardy for him.” Well might Englishmen, thus abused and plundered, remind the great offender himself that “God’s sheep were given into his hands to be pastured, and not shorn or shaven.” Well might they petition the King, as they did, to have the Pope’s collector banished from the realm, and that the statutes against provisions and reservation

of benefices should be renewed, "lest, contrary to the intentions and designs of the founders of the churches, Divine worship should be impaired, and hospitalities and alms neglected, and the devotion of the people be lessened and withdrawn."

Already, when Parliament spoke out so plainly, there had been negotiations on the points at issue, and Wiclif had been one of seven commissioners appointed to treat with the Pope. His name stands second on the list, next to the Bishop of Bangor's; and it is probable, therefore, that his spirited vindication of the national rights, in the matter of tribute, had fixed upon him the eyes of political reformers of the day. At any rate, he went abroad to help to set things right—not to Rome, but to Flanders. The papal court had migrated to Avignon; Bruges was chosen as a convenient meeting-point; and there the Nuncios gave audience to him and his colleagues. There, too, at the same time, were John of Gaunt, and some other nobles, negotiating with ambassadors from the King of France. Conferences could hardly fail to take place between the great duke and the bold churchman, thus meeting on foreign soil; and it may fairly be conjectured that the friendship, which led to important consequences, dates from this period. Urban V. gave the commissioners good words; but the obnoxious claims were not formally renounced, and the work of extortion speedily recommenced.

One like Wiclif could hardly return from such an encounter exactly as he went. His reverence for

the papacy was sure to be abated, for according to advices from Avignon his mission must fail or prosper, and Avignon just then was the scorn and reproach of Christendom. Adversity had not done its purifying work, for the place of exile had all the corruptions of Rome without its venerable traditions and prescriptive sanctity. For intrigue or gain the least reputable Churchmen mustered there from all parts of Europe, while the rulers themselves, cut off from their territorial revenues, were needy, venal, and unscrupulous,—poor, feeble imitators of the Gregorys and Innocents, who had done battle with kings,—till at length, says a modern and carefully impartial historian (Dean Waddington), “the cloud of mystery which had so long hung over the chair of St. Peter, filling the nations with awe for the invisible power and majesty residing there, was dispersed and broken away, and in its place was discovered the nakedness of human turpitude.”

It is highly probable that Wiclif, on his return to England, gave expression to indignant feelings kindled by a nearer view of the working of the papal system. During his absence, as a token of the favour in which he was held by the Court, he was promoted by the Crown to the rectory of Lutterworth; but shortly afterwards he was assailed by opposition from other quarters, which brought him to a fresh stage in his career, and must have proved to him that the path on which he was entering was one beset with dangers.

In February, 1377 he was summoned to appear

before Convocation at St. Paul's. The precise nature of the charges does not appear, but from the specimen which we have given it is plain that ample matter for accusation would be found in his lectures, or in some of the short treatises which went forth from his busy pen and were fast multiplied by friendly transcribers. It was a time of strange confusion both in Church and State, for the Black Prince was dead, the King was fast sinking, and lived only to the following summer, the heir-apparent was a child, and the Duke of Lancaster, his uncle, to whom the regency would naturally belong, stood on doubtful terms with Parliament. Still, the power and influence of one thus near to the throne, combining great vigour of character with large possessions, were undisputed; and, for some reason, personal or political, he was known to favour Wiclif. Accordingly, when the court met, and Courtney, Bishop of London, a man of noble birth and resolute purpose, was presiding, the Duke was there, and a large body of citizens besides, gathered probably by curiosity to see the man whose name was becoming famous throughout England. Wiclif stood prepared to answer for himself, but no trial ensued, and no word of defence was spoken. He was a silent spectator, while a strange scene was enacted between the Bishop and the Duke. There had been some former quarrel, possibly, between them, or it may be that the ill-will of Lancaster against the higher churchmen only found vent at this particular time; for after some previous altercation, he addressed Courtney



thus rudely : " As for you, my lord bishop, who are grown so proud and arrogant, I will bring down the pride, not of you alone, but of all the prelacy in England." " Do your worst, sir," said the prelate. Then came a sharp retort, and another meek reply ; but the duke, still unappeased, spoke aloud of " plucking the bishop by his hair out of the Church." The citizens were indignant that the proud lord should thus presume upon his blood, and threatening words were uttered, and the court broke up in confusion. The excitement spread outside when these things were reported, and before the day was over the Duke's palace at the Savoy was assailed by rioters.

The business, however, was not yet concluded. The same parties, probably, who had been Wiclif's accusers in England, had forwarded charges to the Pope. Five bulls were sent over to the King, the bishops, and the University of Oxford, wherein Wiclif is denounced as having " rashly proceeded to that detestable degree of madness, as not to be afraid to assert, dogmatize, and publicly to teach, such propositions as are erroneous and false, contrary to the faith, and tending to weaken and subvert the whole Church." No wonder that the Pope bestirred himself, and used hard words, when of nineteen articles forwarded to Rome, as being maintained and published in the realm of England, the first and last were these ;—" All mankind, that have been since Christ, have not power simply to ordain that Peter, and all his family, should have political dominion over the world for ever ;"—and again, " An ecclesi-

astic, yea even the Pope of Rome, may lawfully be corrected by subjects, and even the laity, and may also be accused or impeached by them." Very dangerous doctrine, certainly, for those days! And yet to sentiments like these, owing to the extravagant pretensions of the papacy, and the prevalent corruption of the higher clergy, men were beginning to listen with a willing ear; for when Wiclif was summoned before a synod at Lambeth, and papal delegates were there to try him, a crowd of citizens, within and without the chapel, showed plainly that their sympathies were with the men whom the churchmen were pursuing; and not only so, but before sentence was given, an officer from the mother of King Richard appeared in court, and peremptorily forbade the judges to proceed any further with the charges. In prudence they obeyed; rather, the zealots of their party would say, like cowards they dispersed; for Walsingham, who writes as a cardinal might have done, thus reports their discomfiture:—"Like a reed shaken with the wind, their speech became softer than oil, to the public loss of their own dignity, and the damage of the whole Church. They, who had sworn that they would yield no obedience even to the princes and nobles of the realm, until they had chastised the excesses of the heresiarch, conformably to the papal mandate, were smitten with such terror by the face of an obscure retainer of the princess, that you would have thought their horns were gone, and that they had become as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs."

Before the Synod was dispersed, Wiclif had given in his answer to the charges, and, a few months afterwards, he presented another to Parliament, which he calls *A sort of Reply to the Pope's Bull*. These documents have had assailants and defenders. Not only by Romish historians, like Walsingham and Lingard, but by a zealous Protestant, like Milner, they are pronounced evasive and cowardly. Dr. Vaughan and Mr. Le Bas take a more favourable view, and think the apparent discrepancies are to be explained by the modes of thought and expression which schoolmen used and understood, but which have become strangely obscure to less practised intellects. Let the reader judge. The last words, in the first article already quoted, are, "*for ever.*" (in perpetuum.) Do these words mean to include the time beyond the end of the world? or is it meant to be asserted that to Peter and his successors there could not belong *perpetual dominion* over this lower world, in the commonly received sense of those very plain words? According to the former interpretation, the Pope would consider the statement harmless enough. He claimed no more, in his most ambitious moods, than to rule the Church while the world lasted. According to the latter interpretation, he would certainly think his rights infringed; for the permanence of the papal rule, amidst all the fluctuations of temporal things, is a first principle in the theory of those who uphold the Church of Rome. "I meant the *first*, and not the *second*," says Wiclif. Thus runs his explanation:

“ It is plain that it is not in the power of men to hinder the coming of Christ to the last judgment, which we are bound to believe, according to that article of the Creed,—*From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.* For *after that*, according to the faith delivered in Scripture, all human polity will be at an end.” Be it so ; perhaps he meant no more ; in that case, we cannot understand where was the use of saying so much. If he had no newer thing to tell about the government of the Church, and the Pope’s supremacy, it was hardly worth while to provoke a contest by publishing opinions which had no bearing on men’s faith and practice prior to the judgment day.

Some things, however, in the reply would be less palatable to his accusers and judges. The last article was not retracted, but re-affirmed and argued upon. “ Since the Pope is our peccable brother,” it says, “ or liable to sin as well as we, he is subject to the law of brotherly reproof. When, therefore, it is plain that the whole college of cardinals is remiss in correcting him, for the necessary welfare of the Church, it is evident that the rest of the body may chiefly be made out of the laity, may reprove and implead him, as a physician dealeth with a patient, and reduce him to a better life. Yet as his erring from the faith ought not to be supposed in the Lord Pope without evidence, so it ought not to be presumed possible that, when he does so fall, he should be guilty of so great obstinacy as not humbly to accept a cure from his superior with respect to God.”

Certainly, on this point of the pope's infallibility he was explicit enough, and shortly afterwards, in reply to one who had maintained that dogma, he spoke out with uncompromising boldness. If the pope be really incapable of mortal sin, and all that he ordains is just, then, he argues, he may alter the Bible at pleasure, and "make all the Scriptures heresy." It was said by the pope's advocate that his holiness could not err in binding and loosing, and that his sentence, once declared, was surely ratified in Heaven. "The man who should thus lay claim to be a God himself," Wiclif replies, "is a heretic and blasphemer, whom Christians ought not to suffer to live upon the earth. Let them take such an one for their captain, and he will surely lead them over the precipice. According to that opinion it would be easy for the pope to turn the whole world upside down, to obtain kingdoms for his own, and subvert all that has been ordained by Christ Himself. For a lesser fault than such an usurpation of divine power, Abiathar was degraded by Solomon, Peter was reprov'd to the face by Paul, and popes have been deposed by kings and emperors. Wherefore let the soldiers of Christ, laymen and clergy alike, stand for the law of God, even unto blood; ay, though the lord pope, of his own motion, or at the instigation of the devil, or even an Angel from Heaven, should promulgate such a blasphemous opinion, the faithful, for the saving of the faith, should oppose it with one consent."

A busy, anxious life Wiclif must have led at this

time. He had much to do, besides attending citations before bishops and papal delegates. At Oxford many eyes were upon him; numbers looked to him for guidance; the zeal of his more ardent followers would need, doubtless, to be tempered and restrained. He was like a man of war, whose sword was always half unsheathed; for, with a ready pen like his, and a troublesome habit of plain-speaking, which was a part of his nature, after once committing himself to opinions which ran counter to current prejudices and established modes of belief, he could not escape the toil and wear of frequent disputation. His health gave way, and he was assailed with sickness, which appeared likely to prove fatal.

To this period belongs a prophetic sentence, which lives in history as the most notable of his sayings, and which has a place in all trustworthy records of the Reformer's life. The rumour got abroad that he was near his end, and four friars, representing the mendicant orders, attended by four aldermen, waited on him in his chamber. There was war between these men and the sick doctor, and the hope was expressed that he would revoke what had been spoken to their disparagement. As a dying penitent, they said, let him now make such reparation as he could to holy men whom he had slandered in his days of health. He heard the request, but was in no recanting or relenting mood. Sick and weak as he was, he roused himself to face the intruders, and, looking sternly at them, exclaimed, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the evil deeds of the friars."

And who were the friars ? and what were their evil deeds ? It were a long story to tell the last ; and the history of the downward progress of the mendicant orders, from the days of St. Francis and St. Dominic, is at once painful and instructive. When the higher churchmen rivalled princes and nobles in pomp and luxury, and the monastic life, with rare exceptions, had lost its reputation for sanctity and habits of self-denial, men who were bound by vows of poverty, and wandered abroad barefoot, with no vocation but that of preaching against the common vices of mankind, naturally attracted attention and won popular favour. Rich they could not be, as they were pledged to own nothing ; and to be rid of the burden and scandal of wealth gave them an immense advantage in the eyes of a generation to whom the growing corruption of the regular and secular clergy was a standing grievance. Men who went from house to house, carrying neither scrip nor purse, who were neither monks for laziness, nor abbots for pride, but laborious in their journeyings, and plain and earnest in their teaching,—these were supposed to be saints of no common virtue, and priests after God's own heart. And numbers of them deserved the character. They were the friends of the poor, the zealous reprovers, by word and deed, of the sins of the times, the expounders of something like a true Gospel when false glosses and beggarly ceremonies had taken possession of the Churches. But a century and a-half had grievously corrupted them. Their poverty became

a source of gain, men heaping gifts upon them, as alms, till the house and the order became rich, though each man, individually, had nothing that he could call his own. Their popularity made them proud in their turn, and, not content with surpassing negligent pastors in diligence and zeal, or coming to the aid of faithful men whose functions bound them to the altar, they made it their endeavour to outbid them, and catered for the favour of the multitude by vulgar arts and practised hypocrisy. Mendicancy, in fact, was a lucrative calling, and friars were the most troublesome and impudent of beggars,—now standing at the corners of streets with their portable altars, and pressing passers-by to receive the Holy Communion at their hands; now thrusting themselves into sick men's chambers, and proclaiming that alms for the Church, gifts to the house for the love of Christ's poor members, were the offering which God would accept before every other.

Such was the friar of Wiclif and of Chaucer's time. What is gravely told us by the one in a strain of indignant reproof, is merrily told us by the other with a touch of satire and caricature. At any rate, we learn from the *Canterbury Tales* of the poet what sort of stories were told and enjoyed by a company of pilgrims,—parson, monk, clerk, prioress, nuns and all; and the portraits, we cannot help thinking, are likenesses at any rate. Translated into plain prose and modern English, the *Sompnoure's Tale* gives us the following description of a begging friar and his day's work:—He begins with



a sermon at church, of which the burden is "Give, give, that the friars may have houses in which to serve God, and say masses for the souls of your friends, who must be burnt, or baked, or torn with flesh-hooks if they be left unpitied." When the sermon was ended, and the alms were duly given, he starts on his begging rounds, taking with him a sack and a lusty fellow to carry it, then poring and prying into every house, asking for any little matter that can be spared,—meat or cheese, beef or bacon, malt or rye, a mass-penny or an old blanket, nothing will come amiss,—duly recording the names of the givers in his ivory tablets, and rubbing them out as soon as his back is turned. He comes to a well-known house, where he was wont to get good cheer, and finds the master bed-ridden. The wife complains that the husband is cross, and that she has a hard time with him, which leads the visitor to say that curates are nothing worth to probe men's consciences, but for himself, to be diligent in "shrift and preaching," and "study Peter's words and Paul's," and walk abroad and "fish for men's souls," that they might be saved, is all his intent and business. The good woman tells him that her child is dead since she saw him last. "I know it," he says; "it was revealed to me in a vision, and I saw him borne to bliss :"

"And up I arose, and all our convent eke,  
With many a tere trilling on our cheke,  
Withouten noise or clattering of bells,  
*Te Deum* was our song, and nothing else."

While his dinner is getting ready, "head of a roasted pig, and capon's liver," he preaches to man and wife a long sermon on the benefit of fasting. Scripture examples are quoted,—Lazarus and Dives, Moses in the mount, and Aaron at the tabernacle,—our first parents, too, turned out of Paradise for gluttony. Money, therefore, will be well laid out in alms for the convent; for day and night it was the prayer of the Chapter that the sick man might be restored to health, and friars' prayers, let all men know, spring upward, "like a hawk into the air," because in God's sight they are "so humble, chaste, and pure." "Many a pound have I given already to friars of many sorts," is the answer, "and my money is almost spent, and I am none the better." "Wrong again, man," saith the friar; "what need for you to seek many doctors, when you have one already whose skill is perfect? A farthing among twelve makes a sorry pittance for each. To build one church we want it all, and from the life of St. Thomas in India you will see what good comes of building churches." The man's wrath is up when he hears of rivals in the field; and so another sermon, yet longer, is inflicted on the patient about anger, and murder, and the exceeding wickedness of chiding that "holy innocent," his wife. "Let me shrive thee, then, of this sin into which thou hast fallen, so abominable in God's sight, and so fatal to mankind." "Nay," answers the sick man, "the curate shrove me this morning, and I told him all my state." "Something, then, Thomas, something

let us have to build our cloister ; for we are in debt already, and fare hard while the work is going on ; and soon, if charitable people do not come to our help, we shall have to sell our books :

“ ‘ And if ye lack our predication,  
Then goeth this world all to destruction.’ ”

Wiclif did not die ; but lived to verify abundantly his own prediction. Against the friars he preached with unceasing diligence, and in the plainest words the language could supply. How they swarmed in England, and what mischief they wrought among the people, may be inferred from his frequent allusions to them in his practical writings. If he exhorts to charity, and quotes the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, he stops to show that St. Paul's marks of true charity are not found in the friars. If he is expounding the sixth commandment as forbidding us to withhold help from a starving brother, he takes care to except “ pardoners and bold beggars ” as men who deserved no pity. If he is preaching about overcoming the world, he is careful to say that he does not mean in the friars' way, who “ differ nought from thieves, but that they rob more sinfully.” He was not a man to waste words on imaginary evils. What he assailed so often, and so unsparingly, must have met his eye, turn where he would. He denounced the mendicant orders, because, throughout the length and breadth of England, they hindered the cause of Christ, and corrupted the morals of the people. They aped

and caricatured the virtues which he most honoured, and cheated the simple-minded with a poor pretence of godliness. So he made it his business to strip off the mask, and hold up to view the morality of the Gospel, and the example of our Lord Himself, as contrasted with the pretended poverty, and mock humility, and wretched trickeries of those who profaned His Name.

In all the controversies of the day it seems that Wiclif bore an active part; so the great papal schism could hardly fail to be treated of. Soon after his recovery, the question began to be agitated throughout Europe, *who was the real Pope?* Gregory XI. died in 1378, and the cardinals elected Urban VI.; but he turned upon them as a stern judge and a sharp reprover, with so much of indiscreet haste and provoking asperity, that the majority, a few months afterwards, annulled their decision on the plea of coercion and other irregularities, and chose another of their number, known afterwards as the vigorous and unscrupulous Clement VII.\* Then came the strange spectacle of Christendom divided for forty years—of Rome against Avignon—of bulls and anathemas hurled from either place, with the ques-

The *first* so called; Englishmen are more familiar with the *second*, to whom Henry VIII. became suitor for his divorce from Queen Catherine. The Avignon line of popes, of course, was repudiated by those who held to Urban and his successors. To them Clement VII., of the fourteenth century, was only a pretender, and the title might be appropriated by any new pope who coveted it.

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“ ‘ And if ye lack our predication,  
Then goeth this world all to destruction.’ ”

Wiclif did not die ; but lived to verify abundantly his own prediction. Against the friars he preached with unceasing diligence, and in the plainest words the language could supply. How they swarmed in England, and what mischief they wrought among the people, may be inferred from his frequent allusions to them in his practical writings. If he exhorts to charity, and quotes the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, he stops to show that St. Paul's marks of true charity are not found in the friars. If he is expounding the sixth commandment as forbidding us to withhold help from a starving brother, he takes care to except “ pardoners and bold beggars ” as men who deserved no pity. If he is preaching about overcoming the world, he is careful to say that he does not mean in the friars' way, who “ differ nought from thieves, but that they rob more sinfully.” He was not a man to waste words on imaginary evils. What he assailed so often, and so unsparingly, must have met his eye, turn where he would. He denounced the mendicant orders, because, throughout the length and breadth of England, they hindered the cause of Christ, and corrupted the morals of the people. They aped

and caricatured the virtues which he most honoured, and cheated the simple-minded with a poor pretence of godliness. So he made it his business to strip off the mask, and hold up to view the morality of the Gospel, and the example of our Lord Himself, as contrasted with the pretended poverty, and mock humility, and wretched trickeries of those who profaned His Name.

In all the controversies of the day it seems that Wiclif bore an active part; so the great papal schism could hardly fail to be treated of. Soon after his recovery, the question began to be agitated throughout Europe, *who was the real Pope?* Gregory XI. died in 1378, and the cardinals elected Urban VI.; but he turned upon them as a stern judge and a sharp reprover, with so much of indiscreet haste and provoking asperity, that the majority, a few months afterwards, annulled their decision on the plea of coercion and other irregularities, and chose another of their number, known afterwards as the vigorous and unscrupulous Clement VII.\* Then came the strange spectacle of Christendom divided for forty years—of Rome against Avignon—of bulls and anathemas hurled from either place, with the ques-

The *first* so called; Englishmen are more familiar with the *second*, to whom Henry VIII. became suitor for his divorce from Queen Catherine. The Avignon line of popes, of course, was repudiated by those who held to Urban and his successors. To them Clement VII., of the fourteenth century, was only a pretender, and the title might be appropriated by any new pope who coveted it.

tion to be decided by each country, or each individual Christian, which of them all were of deadly efficacy, and which were harmless as a fool's censure or a child's menace. Into the thorny part of the dispute Wiclif did not enter. The contest for power did not greatly move him; and schoolmen might settle, if they would, which election was good, or whether both popes, for the sake of peace, should make way for a third, whom all might agree to honour. He took higher ground, and invited Christian rulers to seize their opportunity, and with a strong hand correct disorders which it was difficult to reach at common times. "Emperors and kings," he writes, "should now help, in this cause to maintain God's law, to recover the heritage of the Church, and to destroy the foul sins of clerks, saving their persons." Let the cardinals elect whom they would, men made too much of the Pope, and falsely understood the law of Christ, if they supposed him free from error, or that he or his priests had any absolving power, apart from contrition and godly sorrow; for, "of all heresies none could be greater than the belief that a man may be absolved from sin if he give money, or because a priest layeth the hand upon his head, and saith, *I absolve thee*." "Trust we, then, in the help of Christ," is his appeal to men in power; "for He hath begun already to help us graciously, in that He hath cloven the head of Antichrist, and made the two parts fight against each other; for it cannot be doubtful that the sin of the popes, which hath so long continued, hath brought in the division."

The insurrection of Wat Tyler, and the civil commotions of the year 1381, would have no place in our history, but for the charge freely circulated by Wiclif's enemies, that he laid the train which exploded with such fearful violence. The name of John Ball is a famous one in connexion with this terrible outbreak. His favourite text, we are told, was—

“ When Adam delved, and Eve span,  
Who then was the gentleman ? ”

and he had preached many a wicked sermon on it, probably. We are told by unfriendly chroniclers that he confessed on the scaffold that he was a disciple of Wiclif; but that fact will go a very little way towards proving that his master shared his evil designs, or was, in any sense, a prompter of treason. Other causes were at work, quite apart from anything that Wiclif may have done by his writings to weaken men's reverence for persons in authority. Taxes pressed heavily on the people; and now the revenue was squandered in games, and shows, and wasteful extravagance in the royal household, instead of purchasing victories in France, which had made the King's father and grandfather so popular. A *fifteenth* was sometimes voted by Parliament to the Crown, which meant that proportion of all the moveable goods of the community; so that the working man, who had little in the world besides tools to get his bread with, had to pay a fifteenth part of their value for his share of the impost. In some old



records still existing at Colchester, the names and assessments of the contributors are preserved; and we learn that one Alice Maynard was possessed of one brass pot, value tenpence, and one towel, worth fivepence, and by virtue of this store of wealth she had the privilege of contributing *one penny sterling* to the necessities of the state. The vexations connected with the poll tax, and the peasant's manly resistance to the ruffianly collector who laid hands upon his daughter, have become matter of authentic history. There were combustible materials, too, of another sort, for any spark to light upon. The people were partly maddened by acts of rapacity and oppression on the part of the lords of the soil, which a weak government could not repress, and which a growing taste for luxury tended greatly to multiply. Independently, too, of special causes of irritation, the transition-state between servitude and freedom had its troubles and dangers. Villeinage was passing away, but not gone. The labourers of England were half emancipated; but, having one arm free, they felt the shackle on the other all the more; and levelling doctrines of the wildest kind were sure to be favourably received by the bolder spirits among those who felt themselves a branded and degraded race.

Probably, therefore, if Wiclif had been nothing but a dry lecturer at Oxford after the approved fashion of the day, the hundred thousand rebels would still have mustered at Blackheath, and the Archbishop of Canterbury would have been be-

headed, all the same, after they had captured the Tower. But it is impossible to say that writings, like those of the Reformer, may not have fanned the flame of discontent. Fearless, pungent, truth-telling, going straight to the point, never sparing wrong-doers in high places, manifesting hearty sympathy with poor men's griefs and wrongs, who shall wonder if they were quoted or misquoted at a time of popular excitement, or if his name and authority were alleged as justifying deeds from which his mind revolted. So, like Luther at the time of the peasant war in Germany, he may bear the blame, such as it is, of supplying some weapons to unruly men who rose up against the law and the law-makers, though none could be more earnest than the German and English reformers in maintaining that civil government was an ordinance of God, and that no good could come of the gathering of lawless multitudes, and the vague demands of incompetent leaders lifted for the hour from obscurity.

Wiclif would hear the news in his peaceful rectory, or in his rooms at Oxford. For a day, London had been at the mercy of an armed mob; King Richard had done bravely; the rebels were dispersed; royal promises were made and broken. Grieved would he be, as a patriotic and wise-hearted Englishman, who loved justice, and felt deeply for the poor and weak, that there had been confusion and bloodshed, without anything done to restrain oppressors, or make humble and virtuous citizens more safe. As years advanced, we may suppose that his country

parish, in the heart of England, would seem like a quiet haven to which he might retreat after a life of storms. There, probably, most of his time was spent; but public duties, it seems, still required his occasional presence at the university, and his travels, to and fro, doubtless had their value for one with so observant an eye, and so large a heart. We hear nothing, however, from contemporaneous writers of his resting-times or journeying-times. No letters have come down to us with dates of time and place. No details of home life are supplied by friends and admiring followers, as in the case of later reformers. We track his course in the public history of the times; and have passing allusions, in his controversial treatises, to some passages in a troubled life; but the slight sketch, which is supplied to us from these sources, has to be filled up from imagination; and when we have read all that his biographers have told us, we seem to know little of the man's inner life, and have fewer traits of individuality recorded than are found pertaining to many other Englishmen, in remote ages, who never attained to half his greatness. Among the learned we find him, at any rate, during the year of insurrection; for some conclusions were put forward in his lectures, which were eagerly fastened upon by his old enemies, the friars, and reported, in high quarters, as heretical and dangerous.

Ever since the Fourth Lateran Council convened by Innocent III. in the year 1215, and attended by some five hundred bishops, the doctrine of the

Romish Church on the subject of the Eucharist had been dogmatically fixed. At last, the faithful were called upon to believe that, by the act of consecration, the bread upon the altar was substantially changed, and turned into the very flesh of our blessed Saviour. No liberty of interpretation was allowed henceforth. The doubts and conjectures of preceding ages, the rhetorical expositions of the fathers, the speculations of Berengarius and others, the metaphysical subtleties of the schoolmen, were all brought to a conclusion; and this monstrous figment, shocking alike to sense and reason, indirectly exalting the priesthood to a mysterious height of dignity which gave them a new power over men's consciences, was a portion of the orthodox faith, like the Incarnation and the Atonement. Probably, this doctrine had been specially prominent in the teaching of the day. The friars were likely to preach it in its most startling form. It was a topic well-suited to their style of oratory,—easily mixed up with appeals to the fears and passions of the people; and the mystery, which would be handled reverently by devout men and sober theologians, we can easily imagine would suggest to the vulgar fanatic, or to the itinerant like Chaucer's mendicant, much that was offensive and mischievous. At any rate, with or without provocation of this sort, Wiclif, both in his pulpit at Lutterworth, and in his lecture-room at Oxford, delivered a doctrine which cannot be reconciled with the decree of the Lateran Council; and when his statements on the controverted subject were

condemned by the Chancellor of the University, and a Synod of Doctors, he grew yet bolder, amplified his previous argument, and formally challenged opponents to refute what he had written. In a treatise called *The Wicket*, he argues at length against the Romish doctrine; but with him, as with many others who have been parties to this bewildering controversy, it is not easy to grasp his meaning when he comes to the positive side of the argument. "May the thing made," he asks, "turn again, and make Him who made it? Thou, then, that art a mortal man, how canst thou pretend to say that thou dost make thy Maker? If ye cannot make the works which He made, how shall ye make Him who made them?" Men argue, he says, that a mirror may be broken into a thousand pieces, and each piece may reflect the perfect face of him who looketh at it. Granted; but it is the figure of the face that is in the glass, not the face itself; so the bread is the figure of Christ's body, not the body itself. Besides, did not our Lord talk of a cup, when He was in the garden, and also when He spoke to the sons of Zebedee of the sufferings that should come upon Him? This was no cup such as men might handle; the cup, according to a figure which all men understood, represented His woes and pains; and why should we suppose that He does not use a like figure when He speaketh at the last supper? "Therefore," he says, "let every man wisely, with meek prayers, and great study, and also with charity, read the words of God in Holy

Scripture. Many of you are like the mother of Zebedee's children, to whom Christ said, *Thou wittest not what thou askest*. You wit not what ye ask, nor what ye do. For if ye did, ye would not blaspheme God as ye do, setting up an alien god, instead of the living God. Christ saith, *I am the true Vine*. Wherefore worship ye not the vine for God, as ye do the bread? In what sense was Christ a vine? or in what sense was the bread Christ's body? Truly, in figurative language, which sinners understand not. And thus, as Christ became not a material or earthly vine, and a material vine became not the body of Christ, so neither is material bread changed from its substance to the flesh and blood of Christ." He piously concludes, as usual, with words of devotion and charity:—"Now, therefore, pray we heartily that this evil time may be made short, for the elect's sake, as He hath promised in His holy Gospel, and that the large and broad way, that leadeth to perdition, may be stopped, and that the strait and narrow way, that leadeth to bliss, may be made open by the Holy Scriptures, that we may know what is the will of God, to serve Him certainly, and with holiness and in fear, that we may find by His help the way to bliss everlasting."

Courtney, Bishop of London, whom we have seen already in collision with the Reformer, succeeded the murdered Archbishop of Canterbury, and when he had received the *pallium* from Rome, without losing a week, began to look abroad in search of the

propagators of the new strange doctrines which began to be rife in many places. In May, 1382, he summoned a convention of divines, in the Priory of Preaching Friars, in London. The very name of the place boded little good to Wiclif and his followers, and the judges, probably, were men of congenial minds with Courtney; for among them, besides bishops, doctors of civil and canon law, and bachelors of divinity, there were no less than nineteen who were mendicants, or monks. Their deliberations issued in a decree which formally condemned twenty-four conclusions said to be promulgated by men of corrupt minds, who were false to their vows, and drew their ignorant followers into grievous error. Wiclif is not named in the sentence, but the writers of the day almost invariably place his name at the head of the list when they assail with foul names the unruly spirits of the age. Some of the conclusions, most certainly, were not his; for instance, that "God ought to obey the devil." But they are worth quoting to show what subjects were in men's minds just then, and what opinions were either maintained by the ecclesiastical agitators, or imputed to them by ecclesiastical rulers. In most of the charges, probably, there was more of likelihood than in the monstrous perversion which we have quoted; and we can hardly doubt that rumours respecting Wiclif's lectures, or an examination of his writings, had supplied some of the materials on which the indictment was founded. The following are some of the opinions denounced

as errors or heresies :—That the substance of the bread and wine was not changed in the Eucharist ; that bishops and priests, falling into deadly sin, were disqualified for all sacred functions, their official acts becoming at once invalid ; that confession to a priest, as ordered by the Church, was not required of all penitents, nor necessary to salvation ; that permanent Church endowments, irrespective of the people's will, and the character of the recipient, were contrary to Christ's law ; that bad men, if they rose to the popedom, had no heaven-derived authority ; that excommunication by a bishop, if the supposed offender was not guilty in God's sight, recoiled on himself ; that appeals from Church courts to the King are lawful, and that to forbid them is treason ; that priests and deacons might preach the Gospel without waiting for permission from pope or prelate ; that clerical delinquents may be judged and deprived by the civil magistrate ; that the institution of religious orders was an evil in the Church, tending in many ways to sin.

Next followed letters mandatory from the Archbishop to the Bishops of London and Lincoln, directed specially against unlicensed preachers, who were supposed to be busily engaged in propagating the obnoxious doctrines. Wiclif was at Lutterworth, and the diocese of Lincoln reached in those days, as it did till recently, not only to the southern borders of Leicestershire, but some way beyond it. So the warning came to him personally, and in his parsonage he had the opportunity of considering



the course which events were taking, and of girding himself up for coming conflicts or trials.

Other engines were in motion, besides edicts from church synods, and episcopal monitions; for a petition had been presented to the King by the clergy, setting forth the great disorders introduced into the realm by men called "Lollards," and asking to have them restrained by statute. A royal ordinance was granted, which by mistake has got upon the roll of parliament, directing the persons therein described to be apprehended and punished. And who were the wrong-doers? What sort of persons are honoured in being made the subject of the oldest persecuting enactment, informal, but not inoperative, which appears among the laws of England? Lively pictures of the state of society in a bygone age are sometimes found in public documents, and in this ancient record of what King Richard and his council decreed in that year, 1382, we have a description, which is worth reading, of men who were doubtless doing a good work for England, though as yet their names were cast out as evil. Thus the ordinance runs:—"Forasmuch as it is openly known that there are divers evil persons within the realm going from one part of the country to another, in certain habits, under dissimulation of great lowliness, and without the license of the ordinaries of the place, or other sufficient authority, preaching daily, not only in churches and churchyards, but in markets, fairs, and other open places where a great congregation of people

is, divers sermons, containing heresies and notorious errors, to the great blemishing of the Christian faith, and destruction of all the laws and estate of Holy Church, to the great peril of the souls of the people, and of all the realm of England; which persons do also preach divers matters of slander, to engender discords and disunion between divers estates of the said realm; which preachers being cited or summoned before the ordinaries of the place, there to answer that whereof they be impeached, they will not obey to their summons and commandments, nor care for their monitions, nor for the censures of Holy Church, but expressly despise them; and, moreover, by their subtle and ingenious words, do draw the people to hear their sermons, and do maintain them in their error by strong hand and by great routs: it is therefore ordained and assented in this present Parliament, that the King's commission be made and directed to the sheriffs, or other sufficient persons learned, and according to the certifications of the prelates thereof, to be made in the chancery from time to time, to arrest all such preachers, and also their fautors, maintainers, and abettors, and to hold them in arrest and strong prison till they shall purify themselves according to law and reason of Holy Church."

Wiclif was not directly attacked, but his sympathies were with the proscribed party; and, in an eloquent passage, which may have formed part of an Easter-day sermon, he denounces the men who would quench the light of God's truth.

We learn abundantly from Wiclif's writings how little of what these men supplied was to be found in the Churches. "Worldly prelates," on whose certification the travelling preachers are to be arrested, are the very men whom he arraigns as "withdrawing from the people the great debt of holy teaching," and whom he pronounces, in his plain-spoken English, as "worse than thieves, more sacrilegious than common plunderers, who break into churches, and steal chalices, and vestments, and gold, by how much God's words, and the bliss of Heaven in the souls of men, are better than all earthly goods." No wonder that the common people, thus robbed of their due, were glad to gather what they could in unlikely places. No wonder that sermons about the great things of salvation, teaching them in plain, homely language how to serve God in their allotted place, and how to die with a good hope, found favour in the eyes of a generation which had listened, till it was weary, to dry disquisitions and barren controversies, and endless talk about the virtue of the sacraments and the reverence due to holy Church.

In other places, however, besides "fairs and markets," the new doctrines were acceptable to many; and Wiclif's followers were becoming a formidable party. At Oxford he had left behind him some men of reputation, and numbers of young disciples, who sympathised largely with his open, truth-loving spirit, and had their eyes quite open to the scandals which he denounced so boldly. The teachers were being tainted; the streams which

watered the parishes of England were in danger of being corrupted at the fountain-head; so the Archbishop got another king's writ directed to the University authorities, and requiring them to make search for approvers of the doctrines condemned by the synod in London, and to expel them from the University unless they recanted their errors within seven days. The writ mentions Wiclif by name, and three others with him—Nicholas Hereford, Philip Reppington, and John Ashton, as known promulgators of the obnoxious opinions. All, probably, had a good title to the distinction. Hereford and Reppington were distinguished as men of learning, and Ashton had acquired notoriety as the most laborious and popular of the itinerants, "who by subtle and ingenious words did draw the people to hear their sermons." The Chancellor of the University, resenting the interference of the Archbishop, refused to render any assistance to the commissioner in giving publication to the decree of the synod; Reppington, too, was appointed just then to preach before the University on the festival of *Corpus Christi*; and instead of silencing him as a proscribed man, this same chancellor, Robert Rigge by name, attended at the church with a hundred armed men to protect the preacher. The proctors, too, were present, and the mayor, and many besides—all of whom listened to a sermon, in which the subject of the Eucharist was cautiously avoided; but much was said on other matters which amounted to a vindication of Wiclif's doctrine.

The Reformer himself, meanwhile, was far away. He was aimed at in all these proceedings, but not summoned into court. He had confronted Courtney once at St. Paul's; and the latter, with all his zeal against innovators, seems to have been cautious as to the next hostile encounter. Possibly it was hoped that, having retired to his country parish, remote in those days both from London and Oxford, Wiclif would content himself with his parochial labours, and incur no further risk by new attacks on the dominant party in the Church. Or it may have been an understood thing that the Duke of Lancaster, the King's uncle, the most powerful man in England, and Wiclif's early patron, would interfere for his protection if any violent measures were attempted. He seems to have been a man of ambition and intrigue, whose political course was shifting and uncertain; but he disliked the great Churchmen of the day as opponents and rivals, and to a certain extent he favoured and courted the Lollards as allies against the common enemy. Religion had nothing to do, probably, with his enmities and friendships; but his name seems to have been a shield for the man who was exposing the cheat of Rome, and stirring the hearts of Englishmen with words of truth and power.

The Reformer, we have said, was far away when the Archbishop and the Chancellor of Oxford were brought into collision; but his was an unslumbering eye and a spirit that could not rest inactive while such a contest was pending. In some of his ser-

mons of this period, it is not difficult to trace allusions to the public events of the time. He was not one to preach in a dry didactic style what would have suited any audience, and might have been listened to with the same interest in an earlier or later century. What concerned himself concerned his people; and the fears or the hopes which possessed his own bosom, as to the Church's fortunes and the progress of truth, he would have his devout and thoughtful hearers share with him. We find allusions, which can hardly be mistaken, to the "great Bishop of England," and the "Pharisees" with whom he was taking counsel; and referring to the recent endeavours to enlist Parliament on their side, he rises to a higher strain than usual, and in sentences, which may have formed part of an Easter-day sermon, speaks of the attempts of men in power to quench the light which God had given. Christ, he says, was laid in the tomb, and soldiers were placed around it, and men sealed it up, and made it as fast as they could; but their strength was weakness; their wisdom was but folly. "Thus do our high-priests and our religious" (monks, that is, and friars), "fear them lest God's law, after all they have done, should be quickened.. Therefore make they statutes stable as a rock, and they obtain grace of knights to confirm them; and all lest the truth of God's law, hid in the sepulchre, should break out to the knowing of the common people. Oh, Christ, Thy law is hidden thus; when wilt Thou send Thine Angel to remove the stone, and

show the truth unto Thy flock?" This last aspiration was ever on his lips or in his heart. The hidden, buried truth brought forth to the light of day; the common people taught out of Christ's law; wholesome, nourishing food for men's souls superseding mummeries and fables; the Church brought back to her purity, and made the teacher and consoler of the poor and weak,—for this he longed and laboured through good and evil report, and therefore passed for the prince of heretics with those who were blind leaders of the blind.

In November, 1382, however, Wiclif was summoned from Lutterworth to Oxford. Parliament and Convocation were both sitting there, and he had business with both. He had appealed to the King against the condemnation pronounced by the synod of doctors in the previous year; and in prosecution of this appeal, or, possibly, as a counter-plea to the charges preferred by the Archbishop against which he must now defend himself, he produced a remarkable manifesto entitled: *A Complaint of John Wiclif, exhibited to the King and Parliament*. The fact of such a document living in history, and yet more, his courage in turning assailant at the very moment when he had to answer for himself to the highest ecclesiastical court in the kingdom, prove that he had reached a point when his voice was a very potential one at that particular crisis, and that he was quite ready, at whatever risk or cost, to stand to what he had said and written. His *Complaint* divides itself into

four articles ; but the argument takes a wide range, and treats of most of the abuses and disorders in the Church which good men were deploring in secret, but knew not how to remedy. Christ's law is appealed to as the one perfect rule, and the advocates of the monastic system are charged with presumption in trying to improve upon it. The claim of the religious orders to be independent of civil jurisdiction is treated with utter scorn, as making monks and friars really lords of the soil, exempting traitors from punishment, and giving those who are "called men of holy Church" full liberty "to dwell in the land at their liking." Tythes and offerings, he maintains, *may be* refused, and *ought to be* refused to unworthy priests ; and poor people will do grievous wrong to their wives and children or poor neighbours, if any of these shall perish with cold and hunger, while payment is made to men who disgrace their sacred calling by luxury and idleness.

The last is a favourite dogma with the Reformer, appearing often, and assuming many different shapes, in his controversial treatises. In the memorial, from which we are quoting, he paints in vivid colours one "swelling with pomp and pride, stained with gluttony, drunkenness, and lechery, unable both of life and knowledge, riding abroad with a fine horse, and gay saddles, and bridles ringing by the way, arrayed in costly clothes and fine furs." If such sights met him often in his journeyings, no wonder that a heart like his, full of compassion to those who toiled in the sweat of their



brow, mourned that aught of the poor man's substance should go to feed the pampered drone, whom discipline should have corrected, or banished from the altar; and we can hardly doubt that he was describing, not a few exceptional cases, but a host of evil-doers, when we find such facts alleged before King and Parliament, as justifying his extreme opinions on the subject of Church dues. Any how the evil was glaring; Church rulers, who were busy in hunting down men like Reppington and Ashton for supposed unsoundness in one article of faith, left open scandals untouched; and this well-timed protest was meant, no doubt, to fix the attention of those who ruled the state on corruptions far deeper, and tenfold more ruinous to men's souls than those with which the Archbishop and Convocation were busying themselves.

Before this tribunal Wiclif had to appear; and his declared opinions on the subject of the Eucharist were made the chief article of accusation. Again we find the commentators on this portion of the Reformer's history at issue as to his firmness and consistency. Old Knyghton says that he equivocated, and "using the subterfuge of his mother-tongue" (as if theological questions could not be well discussed in plain English), repudiated, in fact, what he had before asserted. Dr. Lingard willingly believes this tale; while recent biographers indignantly deny it. We maintain neither Wiclif's infallibility, nor the Pope's; and happily the documents survive which contain the disputed words—

documents admitted by both parties to be authentic. In his divinity lectures he had maintained, not rashly off hand, but as one of twelve conclusions published to the world, that "The consecrated host, which we see upon the altar, is neither Christ, nor any part of Him, but an effectual sign of Him." The first article of the confession now given in runs thus:—"I have often confessed, and I confess still, that the same body of Christ which was born of the Virgin, which suffered on the Cross, which lay in the sepulchre, which rose again on the third day, which ascended into Heaven, and which is seated for ever at the right hand of God the Father, this same body, I say, and the self-same substance, is really and truly the sacramental bread, or consecrated host, which the faithful see in the hands of the priest; of which the proof is that Christ, who cannot lie, so declares it." To unlearned ears this does not sound just like the doctrine of *The Wicket*. "Christ was talking in a figure," the Reformer had said once; where is the figure, if the sacramental bread is really and truly the body which died upon the Cross? Arguments and illustrations were used, a little while ago, which Zwingle might have quoted in after days when he disputed with Luther; against the statement of the confession, as we understand it, the Swiss Reformer would have testified even unto blood. Wiclif, we believe, had a logic of his own which reconciled them; for endless are the subtleties, and marvellous the turnings and windings, of this bewildering and painful contro-

versy; but he did not satisfy, and apparently made no attempt to satisfy, his judges. "I dare not say," he added, "that the body of Christ was the same bread *essentially, substantially, corporally, or identically.*" These, however, were the testing words; very needful it was that they should be spoken. Instead of adopting, the Reformer emphatically disclaimed them; so the sentence went against him, and he was banished from the University of Oxford.

Probably Wiclif's punishment, when reported at Rome, appeared all too light; for he was shortly afterwards summoned to appear before the Pope. He was nearly sixty, and prematurely old, worn with labours, not disposed for a distant journey, and probably not equal to it. A vigorous pontiff, undoubtedly, would have pressed his demand; and the consequence would have been, probably, that the Reformer would have had a martyr's prison at least, if not a martyr's death—or else that, like Luther, he would have gone on to more open defiance than he had yet ventured upon. As it is, Wiclif knew his man, doubtless; and the letter, which he sent in reply, reads almost like banter, as if he felt assured that Urban VII. was too indolent, or too busy, to provoke a contest in the face of Europe. He says that he would willingly travel to Rome, if it were God's will; but Christ had "needed him to the contrary, and, moreover, taught him to obey God rather than man." He hoped, therefore, the Pope would not be Antichrist, and go against Christ's will; for verily he will be nothing

less if he persists in his summons against reason. Let him remember that good intent did not excuse Peter when Christ said, *Get thee behind Me, Satan*; and in like manner the intent will not excuse the Pope if he makes true priests travel more than they ought. There is graver matter, however, as well. It was an opportunity not to be lost of enforcing his favourite doctrine that humility and poverty became the clergy, and that the highest in rule should be the lowliest in temper and demeanour. So thus gravely he reads the Pope a lecture:—"I suppose that the Pope be most obliged to the keeping of the Gospel among all men that live. For the Pope is the highest vicar that Christ has here on earth. For moreness (greatness) of Christ's vicars is not measured by worldly moreness, but by this, that this vicar sues (follows) Christ more in virtuous living; for so the Gospel teaches . . . . And this I take for wholesome counsel, that the Pope leave his worldly lordships to worldly lords, and move speedily his clerks to do so; for thus did Christ, and so taught His disciples, till the fiend had blinded this world."

So Wiclif's Oxford life was closed; and to Lutterworth, and his labours and studies there, his remaining years were given. Among them was his crowning work, already begun, probably, but not yet completed, his translation of the Scriptures into the language spoken by the English people. When the great thought was born within him,—how it grew up,—and under what circumstances his task was prosecuted, no one has told us. Here,

more than any where else, we miss the details of his home life. Fragments of correspondence with helpers and well-wishers, as the work went on, would have been interesting beyond any records of the age which have come down to us. Gladly would we give up half of Froissart for some of the letters which may have passed between Lutterworth and Oxford, containing enquiries, answers, suggestions, from learned men of kindred minds, or the translator's own exulting hopes as chapter after chapter, and book after book, were added to his store. The absence of dates in his works prevents our speaking with certainty as to the time of their being sent forth; but we can hardly doubt that the following sentences belong to this period, and were written in reply to assailants who had heard how he was employed, or in anticipation of objections which were sure to be rife when his scheme was brought to its completion. "Those heretics are not to be heard who imagine that temporal lords should not be allowed to possess the Law of God, but that it is sufficient for them that they know what may be learnt concerning it from the lips of their priests and prelates. As the faith of the Church is contained in the Scriptures, the more these are known in their true meaning, the better, and inasmuch as secular men should assuredly understand the faith they profess, that faith should be taught them in whatever language may be best known to them. Forasmuch, also, as the doctrines of our faith are more clearly and exactly expressed in the Scriptures than they may probably be by

priests, (seeing, if I may so speak, that many prelates are but too ignorant of Holy Scripture, while others conceal many parts of it) and the verbal instructions of priests have many other defects, the conclusion is abundantly manifest that believers should ascertain for themselves what are the true matters of their faith, by having the Scriptures in a language which they fully understand. For the laws made by prelates are not to be received as matters of faith, nor are we to confide in their public instructions, nor in any of their words, but as they are founded on Holy Writ; since, according to the doctrine of Augustine, the Scriptures contain the whole truth, and this translation of them into English should therefore do, at least, this good,—namely, placing bishops and priests above suspicion as to the parts of it which they profess to explain. Other means, such as the friars, prelates, may all prove defective; and to provide against this, Christ and His Apostles evangelized the greater portion of the world, by making known the Scriptures to the people in their own language.\* To this end, indeed, did the Holy Spirit endow them with the knowledge of tongues. Why, then, should not the living disciples of Christ do in this respect as they did?”

\* We must presume that “*the Scriptures*” here mean the doctrine contained in the Scriptures. Wiclif was too well informed to suppose that *the Scriptures*, properly so called,—the Holy Books which make up the Canon,—were written in many languages during the Apostolic age.

On the good Protestant doctrine of *the sufficiency of Scripture*, Wiclif never wavers. There are no fine-drawn distinctions when he gets on that ground—no words of obscure or doubtful meaning that can pass for recantation or contradiction. He speaks out like Luther—rails, we must say, like Luther—has good arguments, as well as bad names, in his quiver, and aims them in rapid succession at the giant foe encased in his thickest armour. The title of one of his treatises runs thus: *How Antichrist and his clerks travail to destroy Holy Writ, and to make Christian men unstable in the faith, and to set their ground in devils of hell*; and he deals in order with *four* arguments, which he calls so many “wheels in Satan’s car,”—much the same, in fact, as those which figure to this day in the front of every Romish protest against the free circulation of God’s Word. Faith, God’s gift—the truth evidencing itself to the conscience—the heavenly teacher, better than all human guides—were favourite topics with the Reformer; and no wonder that he disdained the notion of being absolutely dependent on oracles like those who then ruled the Church; so the *third* wheel is thus broken: “They say that no man can know what is the Gospel, but by the approving and confirming of the Church. But true men say that to their understanding this is full of falsehood. For Christian men have certainty of belief, by the gracious gift of Jesus Christ, that the truth taught by Christ and His Apostles is the Gospel, though all the clerks of Antichrist say never so fast to the

contrary, and require men to believe the contrary, on pain of cursing, poisoning, and burning. And this belief is not founded on the Pope and his cardinals (for then it might fail and be undone, as *they* fail, and sometimes be destroyed); but on Jesus Christ, God and man, and on the Holy Trinity; and so it may never fail, except from his default who should love God and serve Him. For Almighty God, and His truth, are the foundation of the faith of Christian men; and, as St. Paul saith, *Other foundations may no man set, besides that which is set, that is Jesus Christ.* Therefore, though Antichrist and all his accursed clerks be buried deep in hell for their accursed simony, and pride, and other sins, yet the Christian's faith faileth not, and plainly because *they* are not the ground thereof. For He is our God, and our best Master, and ready to teach true men all things profitable and needful for their souls."

Sustained by arguments like these, longing to enrich his countrymen in the highest sense, and hoping to make the next generation more independent of teachers against whom his living voice had so often warned them, Wiclif began his work, and toiled at it till it was finished. The voice of tradition is uniform in giving him the credit of the entire translation. He planned it, no doubt; he superintended every portion of it; his name gave it credit and currency. The New Testament, probably, was done by his own hand; a manuscript in the Bodleian Library assigns the translation of the



Old Testament, as far as the middle of the Book of Baruch, to his friend Nicholas Hereford; and another hand, or Wiclif's own, may have supplied the rest. There may have been more coadjutors; but, at most, the band seems to have been a small one to execute a work of such size and difficulty; very small as compared with the *seventy* who produced the Greek version of the Old Testament, and the *forty-seven* learned Englishmen who, more than two centuries afterward, gave our ancestors the inestimable boon of our *authorized version*. They translated from the Vulgate, Greek scholarship being almost unknown at that time, and Greek manuscripts hardly accessible. Many imperfections there must have been in a first attempt thus made: but it was a noble work, undertaken in faith, and prosecuted patiently and diligently, without help or patronage from high quarters, while the little company were cheered by mutual counsel and sympathy; and the hope of guiding many of their countrymen heavenward sustained them through days and nights of toil.

And what sort of English was it when it was done? how nearly resembling our own? how far intelligible to modern readers? We will give a few specimens which will be at once recognized, in the opening verses of the Sermon on the Mount, a part of the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, and some verses out of St. Paul's description of charity:—

“Blessid be pore men in spirit; for the kyngdom of hevenes is hern. Blessid be mylde men; for

thei schulen weeld the erthe. Blessid be thei that moornen ; for thei schulen be comfortide. Blessid be thei that hungren and thirsten rightwisnesse ; for thei schulen be fulfillid. Blessid ben merciful men ; for thei schulen gete merci. Blessid ben thei that ben of clene herte ; for thei schulen se God. Blessid be pesible men ; for thei schulen be clepid Goddis children."

"There was a riche man that was clothid with purpur and whigt silk, and ete everi dai schynyngli ; and there was a begger lazarus bi name that laie at his gate ful of bilis, and concitid to be fulfilled of crummes that fillin down fro the riche mannes borde : and no man gaf to him ; but houndis camen and likkiden his bilis."

"If I speke with tungis of men and of aungels, and I have not charite, I am made as bras sownynge or a cymbal tinklyng. And if I have profecie, and knowe alle mysteries, and all kynninge, and if I have all feith so that I meve hillis fro her place, and I have not charite, I am nought. And if I departe alle my godis in to metis of pore men, and if I bitake my bodi so that I brenne, and I have not charitie, it profetith me nothing. Charite is pacient, is benygne ; charite envyeth not ; it doth not wickidli ; it is not blowun ; it is not concitous ; it sekith not tho thingis that ben his owne ; it is not stired to wrahthe ; it thenkith not yvel ; it joieth not on wickednesse, but it joieth to gidre to truthe ; it suffrith alle thingis ; it bileveth alle thingis ; it hopith alle thingis ; it systeyneth alle thingis."

There are a few hard words in these passages no doubt; but let any one take a page of Chaucer, who lived in the same age with Wiclif, and if he be not well versed in antiquarian lore, he will find it much more difficult to translate. Let us travel back half a century, and see a specimen of yet older English. In the first half of the fourteenth century, one Richard Rolle, commonly called *Hampole*, from the name of a place near Doncaster, where he led a hermit life, translated portions of the book of Psalms; and he tells us in a preface that "in his work he had sought no strange English, but that which was easiest and commonest, and most like to the Latin." To us, certainly, the English looks strange enough, though our readers, probably, from the identity of some of the expressions, will be able to trace the *twenty-third* Psalm. "Our lord governeth me, and nothing to me shall want; stede of pasture that He me sette. In the water of hetyng forth He me brougte; my soul He turnyde. He ladde me in the stretis of rygtwysnesse for His Name. For win gif I hadde goo in myddil of the shadewe of deeth, I shall not dreede yveles, for Thou art with me. Thi gerrde and Thi staf thei have coumfortid me. Thou hast greythid in my sigt a bord agens hem that angryn me. Thou fattide my heved in oyle, and my chalys drunkenyng what is cleer; and Thi mercy shal folewe in alle the dayes of my lyf, and that I wone in the house of oure Lord in the lengthe of dayes."

Comparing the style of Wiclif's Bible, therefore,

with any thing that is older, I think we reach the conclusion that it must have had considerable effect in fixing our language; and, besides all that we owe to him on other grounds, we may well be grateful to him on this special ground. He wrote at a time when the Latin of the scholar, the Norman of the Court, and the Anglo-Saxon of the people were being fused into one composite tongue, to be spoken henceforth by the united English people; and the phrases selected at such a period, by one who was giving the Word of Life to his countrymen, would sound, in many ears, the grandest and the sweetest for all time to come.

So the work was finished, by dint of patient toil, and faith, and prayer. God's message to His creatures might be read in the English tongue; but it is difficult for us to understand how much had still to be done before it could become the property of the English nation. In the passage which we have quoted Wiclif argues against the doctrine that "*temporal lords*" might not have the Scriptures in a language which they understood. Lower he did not think of going. How should any but men of wealth become possessed of such a treasure? Transcribers, doubtless, would be busy; many hands, for love or hire, would multiply the precious manuscripts; and when the new doctrines were spreading widely, and the appeal of Wiclif and his followers was always, "To the law and the testimony," a single copy, borrowed for a while, and shared with many partners, would have a score of readers, or a

hundred, possibly, before it came back to the rightful owner. But still it could be only the select few that ever saw a fragment of the Holy Book, and fewer still were they who could sit and ponder it chapter by chapter, reading, and musing, and reading again, as men need to do when new truths are dawning upon their minds.

Somehow difficulties were overcome. An army of zealous and willing helpers must have mustered round the leaders, for it is quite certain that, in the course of a few years, without the aid of the wonder-working Press, the good seed was scattered widely over the counties of England. Wiclif's traducers are good witnesses on this point. Thus Knyghton tells his tale, and deplores the evil, wrought, as he would say, by unholy hands:—"Christ delivered His Gospel to the clergy and doctors of the Church, that they might administer to the laity, and to weaker persons, according to the state of the times, and the wants of men. But this Master John Wiclif translated it out of Latin into English, and thus laid it more open to the laity, and to women, who could read, than it had formerly been to the most learned of the clergy, even to those of them who had the best understanding. In this way the Gospel-pearl is cast abroad, and trodden under foot of swine; and that which before was precious both to clergy and laity is rendered, as it were, the common jest of both. The jewel of the Church is turned into spoil of the people, and what had hitherto been the choice gift of the clergy and of divines is made for ever

common to the laity." More truly, we think, may the Reformer's great feat, and its results, be thus described :—

“ Of the Book that had been a sealed-up book,  
He tore the clasps, that the nation  
With eyes unbandaged might thereon look,  
And learn to read salvation.

At first for that spark, amidst the dark,  
The friar his fear dissembled ;  
But soon at the fame of Wiclif's name  
The throne of St. Peter trembled.” \*

The last two years of Wiclif's life were spent quietly at Lutterworth. We cannot doubt that he “ watched for souls as one that must give account.” Sincerity and earnestness are stamped on all that he ever wrote. He had been battling through life with men who robbed the people of their due in the way of Christian teaching, and his own flock, while he lived among them, it is well-nigh certain had “ line upon line” given them, and “ precept upon precept,” not only in the old church which crowns the hill above the Swift, but also family by family, in their humble quiet homes. The neglects and unfaithfulness of parish priests are exposed with unsparing severity in Wiclif's treatise on *The Office of Curates*, which begins with this pithy sentence :—  
“ The office of curates is ordained of God ; few do it well, and many full evil ; therefore test we their

\* Moir, under the signature of (Δ), in “Blackwood,” quoted by Vaughan.

defaults, with God's help;" and then follows a list of offences, amounting to *thirty-three*. Sharp censors, we know, too often fall short of their own standard of goodness, and a man may be very quick to spy out faults in men of his own class without attaining himself to any pre-eminence in virtue; but, looking at the place which the Reformer occupied, and at the certainty of the retort from irritated adversaries, "*Physician, heal thyself*," if he proved a faithless shepherd, we may well conclude that the man who wrote down that catalogue of "defaults" had a clear conscience, and could bear to have his own life searched through and through. Testimonies on this subject, as on other matters apart from his more public life, we would gladly supply if we could. But considering the dreary period which followed Wiclif's protest against ecclesiastical corruptions, remembering that four generations grew up under the domination of the Church of Rome between the men who saw him in their streets and the men who renewed his protest, and carried forward his work, at the Reformation period, we cannot wonder that all traditions of his home life, and parochial life, have perished.\*

\* Mr. Le Bas writes:—"Various stories, it would appear, are current to this day in the town of Lutterworth respecting its ancient and renowned rector; but the only one among them that appears worthy of attention is that which represents him as admirable in all the functions of a parochial minister. A portion of each morning, it is said, was regularly devoted to the relief of the necessitous, to the consola-

On one point there can be no doubt—that he was most diligent in preaching. Men needed to be stirred by the living voice; and he did what he could, by precept and example, to supply the Church's miserable lack of service in this particu-

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tion of the afflicted, and to the discharge of every pious office by the bed of sickness, and of death."

The author is sorry to contradict one whom he respects so highly, and whose eloquent narrative has taught numbers of this generation to appreciate the greatness of the man who was too little known to our fathers and grandfathers. But having been curate of Lutterworth for many years, and having had full opportunity of learning all that local tradition could supply respecting its "renowned rector," he is enabled to state that no patriarch of the place pretended to know more about Wiclif's habits and mode of life than all the world knows. The traditions of the place were, that the present pulpit had come down from the days when the Reformer preached in it; that he died sitting in an oak chair still shown in the vestry; that a curious old table, and a pair of wooden candlesticks once belonged to him; and that the old parsonage stood in the kitchen-garden of the present rectory, and was pulled down when the present larger and more commodious house was built by Bishop Ryder, more than fifty years ago. To be strictly accurate, I should add that an old rag, of very dubious texture, was exhibited in a glass case, and all men were welcome to believe, if they pleased, that it was a fragment of Wiclif's gown. Gladly would we part with these relics if we might have any characteristic anecdotes of the man who filled so large a space in the history of his times,—anything that looked like reality, to show what he was when he lived among common men, and had left the field of combat, in which his earlier years were spent, for the retired and peaceful scenes of pastoral duty.



lar. One of his treatises is, *Of feigned contemplative life*; and seeing how monasticism was abused, and how many priests were little better than slumbering drones, while the people were perishing for lack of knowledge, he speaks out plainly about "the devil beguiling hypocrites to excuse themselves from active service," on the plea that they had no time for both, and that a contemplative life was best. Of his own sermons or postils, as they were called—short expositions, generally, of the Scripture portion for the day—hundreds are scattered through libraries in manuscript. In these days the old topics are sometimes handled, and his hearers are cautioned, in his own style, against teachers who would lead them astray. We hear of Antichrist and his clerks—of the friars and their tricks—of lordly prelates living too grandly and preaching too seldom; but there is a plentiful admixture of more practical and homely topics. Sin and salvation from sin—the incarnation and passion—pardon, the gift of God for Christ's sake, not earned by man's obedience, or purchased by alms and penances—spiritual worship, and the service of love and freedom, to supersede the deluding superstitions and wretched compromises which were a part of the religion of the day—these were all largely dwelt upon, and pressed home on the consciences of his hearers by plain speech and intelligible arguments. In the schools he had disputed like a scholar; with the doctors he had contended after the fashion of their warfare, and could wield

the customary weapons like the best of them ; but he had milk for babes, as well ; and in his parochial teaching he spoke of that which concerned all men alike, in language such as all could understand. Perhaps the best specimens of his popular style are found in his work called *The Poor Caitiff* ; a collection of short treatises, evidently intended for the instruction of unlearned persons, beginning with a plain exposition of the *Belief*, the *Lord's Prayer*, and the *Ten Commandments*. A few extracts, culled at random, will be more interesting to many readers than the passages already quoted from his controversial writings. The prologue informs us that he intends, "by the great mercy and help of God, to teach simple men and women, of good will, the right way to Heaven, without multiplication of many books, if they will busy themselves to have it in mind, and work thereafter."

"All things needful to man, either to soul or body, are contained in the *Lord's Prayer*. It is the prayer, full of wisdom and health, which Christ taught His disciples. This holy prayer contains seven askings ; and in these short askings is contained more wisdom than any tongue of man can fully tell here on earth. When a child is first set to school, men teach him the *Paternoster* ; therefore let him that will learn be meek as a child, and without malice. God careth not for long tarrying, nor for smooth words either said or sung. What is it to patter with the lips, when the heart prayeth not by desire ? What difference there is betwixt the bran and the flour of the wheat, such there is between the sound of the lips and the heart."

"Love is the desire of the heart, ever thinking on that which it loveth. Love is stirring of the soul to love God for

Himself, and all other things for God. This love putteth out all other love that is against God's will. Love is a right will, turned from all earthly things, and joined to God without departing, accompanied with the fire of the Holy Ghost, far from corruption, to no vice bowing, high above all fleshly lusts, ever ready to the contemplation of God, the sun of good affections, the health of good manners and of the commandments of God, the death of sins, the life of virtues. Without love no man can please God; with it no man sinneth to death. True love clotheth the soul, and delivereth it from the pains of hell, and of foul service to sin, and from the fearful fellowship of devils. The child of the fiend it maketh the son of God, and partaker of the heritage of Heaven."

"This is the right spur that should quicken thy horse to speed in his way—that thou learn to love Jesus Christ in all thy living. And therefore send thou thy thought into that land of life, where no disease is, of no kind, neither age, nor sickness, nor any other grievance. Courtesy and wisdom these men must learn, for there all villany is shut out. And whoso goeth thither shall find there a gracious fellowship—the orders of Angels, and of all holy saints, and the Lord above them who gladdeneth them all. *There* is plenty of all good, and want of all things that may grieve. Thence are banished thieves and tyrants, cruel and greedy men that pillage the poor, proud men and boasters, covetous and beguilers, slothful and licentious; all such are banished out of that pure land. For there is nothing that men may fear, but liking and joy, and mirth at will, melody and song of Angels, bright and lasting bliss that never shall cease. Man's body there shall be brighter than the sun ever was to man's sight. As the light of the sun suddenly flees out of the east into the west, so shall the blissful, without any travail, be where they like. And though they were sick and feeble while they lived here, they shall be so strong there, that nothing shall move against their will. They shall have such great freedom, that nothing shall be contrary to their liking. The saved bodies shall never have sickness, nor anger, nor grievance. Also they shall be

filled with joy in all their senses ; for as a vessel that is dipped in water, or other liquor, is wet within and without, above and beneath, and also all about, and no more liquor can be within it, even so shall those that are saved be full filled with all joy and bliss. Also they shall have endless life in the sight of the Holy Trinity ; and this joy shall pass all other. They shall be in full security that they never fail of that joy, nor be put out thereof. They shall have full knowledge of the Holy Trinity—the might of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, the goodness of the Holy Ghost. For, in the sight of the blessed face of God they shall know all things that may be seen of any creature. This is the right spur—to love Jesus Christ—which should stir men joyfully to hasten them in the heavenly way. For so sweet is the bliss there, and so great withal, that whoso might taste a single drop thereof should be so rapt in liking of God and of heavenly joy, and he should have such a languishing to go thither, that all the joy of the world should seem pain to him.”

Truly our mother tongue had attained to much of richness and strength when these passages were written. We shall look in vain for any thing so like our purest and most nervous English before Wiclif began his noble work. A portion of the second extract is like an echo of some strain of Jeremy Taylor's ; and the simplicity of the third, combined with the elevation of thought and fulness of particulars, reminds us of the breathings after heavenly joy contained in Baxter's *Saints' Rest*.

While the Reformer was busy teaching his own people the elements of Christian faith and morals, he was no unobservant spectator of public events. The crusading spirit had died out, and unbelievers were left in undisturbed possession of the Holy

Land. But at this period a new form of crusade was devised, and knights and soldiers were delighted to hear once again that fighting and slaying would serve for alms and penances to procure special favours from Heaven. Europe was divided between rival popes. France and Spain sided with Clement at Avignon,—England with Urban at Rome. Anathemas had been exhausted, and it was resolved to try what material weapons, and an arm of flesh, could do. Urban proclaimed a crusade against the adherents of Clement; and “marvellous indulgences,” as Knyghton calls them, had come over to England, offering absolution, in a very wholesale way, to those who would contribute money, or enlist soldiers, for the bringing of the refractory nations of Europe to submission. “An untold and incredible sum was collected,” says the same historian, partly in money, partly in plate, jewels, rings, bracelets, and other ornaments,—devout ladies being the most willing and bountiful contributors. Spencer, Bishop of Norwich, who had done deeds of ruthless cruelty at the time of Wat Tyler’s insurrection, now headed a force of 5000 men, and embarking for Flanders, stormed Gravelines and Dunkirk, revelling in slaughter at both places, and swelling with triumph, like one who had found a congenial element. Wiclif, naturally, could not restrain tongue or pen while such enormities were perpetrated. Thus he breaks out: “Christ is the Good Shepherd, for He puts His own life for the saving of the sheep. But Antichrist is a wolf of ravening, for he ever does the

reverse, putting many thousand lives for his own wretched life. By forsaking things which Christ had bid His priests forsake, he might end all this strife. Why, is he not a fiend, stained foul with homicide, who, though a priest, fights in such a cause? If man-slaying in others be odious to God, much more in priests, who should be the vicars of Christ. Friars now say that bishops can fight best of all men, and that it falleth most properly to them, since they be lords of all this world. Thus they say the Maccabees fought; and Christ bade His disciples sell their coats to buy them swords; and whereto, if not to fight? But Christ taught not His disciples to fight with a sword of iron, but with the sword of God's Word, which standeth in meekness of heart, and in the prudence of man's tongue. And as Christ was the meekest of men, so He was most drawn from the world, and would not judge or divide a heritage among men, and yet He could have done that best."

Wiclif's denunciations of war, however, go beyond these seasonable rebukes of the warlike churchman. His opinions were apt to run into extremes. "It was prophesied," he said, "that, under the reign of the Prince of Peace, men should beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Under the old dispensation, no doubt, devout men were soldiers; but they fought with God's enemies, and were expressly called to their work. Without this call men might not fight now, any more than Jewish kings or captains might invade

heathen countries unbidden." It was well known that special messages as to human conduct had ceased for ages; and by imposing this condition, therefore, the writer would seem to forbid Christian men to draw the sword under any circumstances. He is prepared for the answer, and is not daunted by it: "Here men of this world come and say that by this wise kingdoms would be destroyed. But here our faith teaches that, since Christ is our God, kingdoms should be thus established, and their enemies overcome. But, peradventure, some men would lose their worldly riches, and what harm were thereof? Well indeed I know that men will scorn this doctrine; but men who would be martyrs for the law of God will hold thereby. What honour falls to a knight that he kills many men? the hangman killeth many more, and with a better title. Better were it to be butchers of beasts than butchers of their brethren."

Wars of aggression, without any pretence of necessity or justice, were then so common that it is possible the prohibition was meant to apply to these, and that the extremest doctrine on the subject of self-defence, in the case of nations, was not meant to be asserted. Any how we may admire the courage of the man who could write thus in the days when military prowess passed for almost the chief of virtues, and the rules of chivalry were a binding law for all Christendom. As to wars begun and prosecuted by the stronger against the weaker, we may listen, not doubtfully, but with entire assent

and approval to some weighty words to which ambitious rulers, and powerful nations, would do well to take heed,—inscribed on one of the pages of a treatise *Of the seven deadly sins*:—"We should understand that, if God enjoin conquest, it may then be lawful, as in the case of the children of Israel. When a kingdom by sin has forfeited, against its chief Lord, Christ, in punishment of such trespass, He may give it to another people. But men should not dream that a people have so sinned, and that God will thus punish them, except God tell it them."

The numbers and variety of the treatises written by Wiclif, after his retirement to Lutterworth, prove that his industry was marvellous. Their subjects and style show that his zeal for the purification of the Church was undiminished, and that his spirit was not bowed down by the weight of nearly three-score years, or by the self-imposed burden of unceasing conflict with giant corruptions. He wrote on *The Imposture of Hypocrites*,—on *Obedience to Prelates*,—on *Good Preaching Priests*,—on *The four deceits of Antichrist*,—on *The Prayers of Good Men*,—on *Servants and Lords*; and, for his closing testimony on a wide subject, sent out some more *Objections to Friars*, founded partly on the zeal which they had manifested, and the impieties, which they had published abroad, when money was wanted for the Pope's Crusade. A work styled *Trialogus*, being a lengthened discussion on matters of theology, in which the speakers are Truth, False-



hood, and Wisdom, contains the substance, probably, of his divinity lectures at Oxford, with such additions and alterations as his riper judgment supplied. Another, on *Clerks Possessioners*, deals largely with a subject which recurs frequently both in his earlier and later writings,—that of endowments for the clergy. He saw the Church corrupted by its wealth, and mourned for the absence of some checking or controlling power, to ensure a better distribution, or to keep the possessors to their duties. He saw the higher dignitaries spending their ample revenues in pomp and luxury, and religious houses, built as nurseries for piety, harbouring an army of priests who loved a life of dreamy idleness better than active service in the dusty highways of life. Meanwhile, humble devoted men, who went abroad as evangelists among the people, and did the work which others left undone, were pursued with scorn, or reported to the magistrate as troublers of the peace. With this spectacle before his eyes, he said, at one time, that the temporal lords should infuse strength into the Church by laying violent hands on her revenues,—at another, that poor men ought in justice to themselves, to withhold tithes and offerings from unworthy priests. The clergy had once lived upon alms, and it would be well for them and their flocks if the whole practice were revived. He forgot, when he argued thus, that the abundance of the alms had made the difficulty, and that the broad lands, and heaped-up wealth, were really the gifts of piety and superstition to men who were

honoured for their sanctity, or were supposed to have heavenly gifts in their keeping. The subject was a wider and deeper one than his political philosophy could settle,—not to be disposed of by pictures, vividly drawn, of the Apostolic Church in her lowliness and poverty, or by appeals to a remote antiquity, which bore no resemblance to the circumstances of modern life. Wiclif's statement of facts we take as an important part of the history of the times; his courage, in striking so boldly at the very sorest part of the body politic, makes him a hero fit to stand by the bravest of those who have stood up against power in evil days; but when he dogmatizes rashly on one of the most difficult of social problems, and with sweeping assertions and sharp invectives cuts the knot which wiser men have failed to disentangle, we need not follow him to his conclusions, or think that the abuses, which kindled his indignation, admitted no less violent remedy.

In December, 1384. he received his death-stroke. Walsingham thus describes it:—"On the day of St. Thomas the Martyr, Archbishop of Canterbury, John Wiclif, the organ of the devil, the enemy of the Church, the confusion of the common people, the idol of heretics, the looking-glass of hypocrites, the encourager of schism, the sower of hatred, and the maker of lies, when he designed, as it is reported, to belch out accusations and blasphemies against St. Thomas in the sermon that he had prepared for that day, was suddenly struck by the judgment of God, and had all his limbs seized with the palsy; and that

mouth, which was to have spoken huge things against God and His saints or Holy Church, was miserably drawn aside, and afforded a frightful spectacle to the beholders ; his tongue was speechless, and his head shook, showing plainly that the curse, which God had thundered forth against Cain, was also inflicted on him." We read his story differently. It was an age of abounding iniquity, when the light burned dimly on the altar, and the men, who should have been the keepers and expounders of Holy Writ, gave the people lying fables for Gospel truth. The land was overspread with indolent priests who led an easy life within convent walls, and vulgar fanatics, in the garb of poverty, whose impostures were alternately a snare and a jest to the deluded people. Abroad, rival popes were cursing each other ; and bishops fought for him who cursed the loudest ; and, at home, recruits were gathered for the unholy war by the promise of pardons and indulgences in addition to monthly pay. *Then* one brave, honest man stood up to arraign the wrong-doers, to declare that God's law was above all the Church's rules and orders, and to recall men from devious paths, and muddy brooks, and barren pastures, to the pure well-spring of the water of life. He was a man of ardent temperament, and used harsh, abusive words often, when milder phrases would have proved more convincing and persuasive. He decided peremptorily, and without reserve, on matters which required cautious handling ; and in his controversial treatises, hastily composed and sent forth, propositions may be

found which it required more than the logic of the schoolmen to reconcile with his own position, and with each other. But he did a great work for England in bad times; he was a fearless, single-hearted, truth-loving confessor, when the Church's foul corruptions and overshadowing power were driving good men to despair, and thoughtful men to unbelief; he knew and said that God was true, if all men were liars, and called his generation, by his noble work of translation, to hear what the Lord Himself had spoken; and for all this we will reverse what the chroniclers of that age have falsely spoken, and will put his name among those whom the best and wisest of our countrymen have most delighted to honour.

He lived two days after his paralytic seizure, and died on the last day of the year. "Admirable," says old Fuller, in his Church History, "that a hare, so often hunted, with so many packs of dogs, should die, at last, sitting quietly in his form." It is a wonder that wants explaining, especially as a fiercer persecution began so soon after he was gathered to his rest. Why was Lord Cobham burnt, when his teacher escaped? Why were hundreds of meaner men hunted soon afterwards for their lives, under the cruel Act of Henry IV., when the man whose doctrine they had imbibed preached in his own church without disturbance to the last week of his life? How came the watchful emissaries of Rome to let the writings of the Reformer cover the land, by means of a hundred scribes, before they began to

search for them as containing deadly heresy? The strange disorders of the papacy doubtless tied the hands of those who would gladly have silenced their troublesome reprovcr. Urban VI., whose title was disputed by half Europe, lived some years after Wiclif, and was busily engaged in seeking allies, enlisting soldiers, and publishing anathemas, to maintain his rule. At home many things concurred to prevent any vigorous exertion of authority while Richard sat upon the throne, but when he was pushed aside by his cousin, Henry IV., the usurper found zealous supporters in Archbishop Arundel and the clergy, and paid the price of their allegiance in persecuting enactments against the Lollards. The statute *De heretico comburendo* was passed in the second year of his reign, and William Sawtree, its first victim, was burnt before it was many months old.

The confessions of these men, and their sufferings, belong to another chapter of history. One thing we learn from the records of the next age, that Wiclif's name was on the lips of all who were striving to quench the light of truth, and that his writings, which seem to have been multiplied to an almost incredible extent, were hunted after and destroyed as if the air were tainted with them. By the *Constitutions of Arundel*, passed in convocation in the year 1408, it was enacted, that "all books, of the kind written by John Wiclif, and others of his time, should be banished from schools, halls, and all places whatsoever; that no man should hereafter translate

any part of Scripture into English on his own authority, and that all persons convicted of making or using such translations should be punished as favourers of error and heresy." In the year 1415 the Council of Constance went yet further, and turned the war from the Reformer's books to his bones. It was decreed by the assembled prelates of Christendom that "his body, if it could be discerned and known from the bodies of other faithful people, should be taken from the ground, and thrown far away from the burial of any church, according to the canon law and decrees." There was much delay in the execution of this order, as in the carrying out of many wholesome measures of reform which were much talked of in the same council, but never accomplished. In the year 1428, however, the spiteful deed was done. The mouldering remains were dragged from the grave in the chancel, and burnt, the ashes being cast into the Swift, a little stream which flows beneath the town. Another testimony was given in the hall from whence the foolish sentence had proceeded. John Huss witnessed a good confession there, before the faithless Sigismund and the assembled councillors, and when required to pronounce his dissent from the doctrine of Wiclif, gave for answer, "*I am content that my soul should be where his soul is.*"